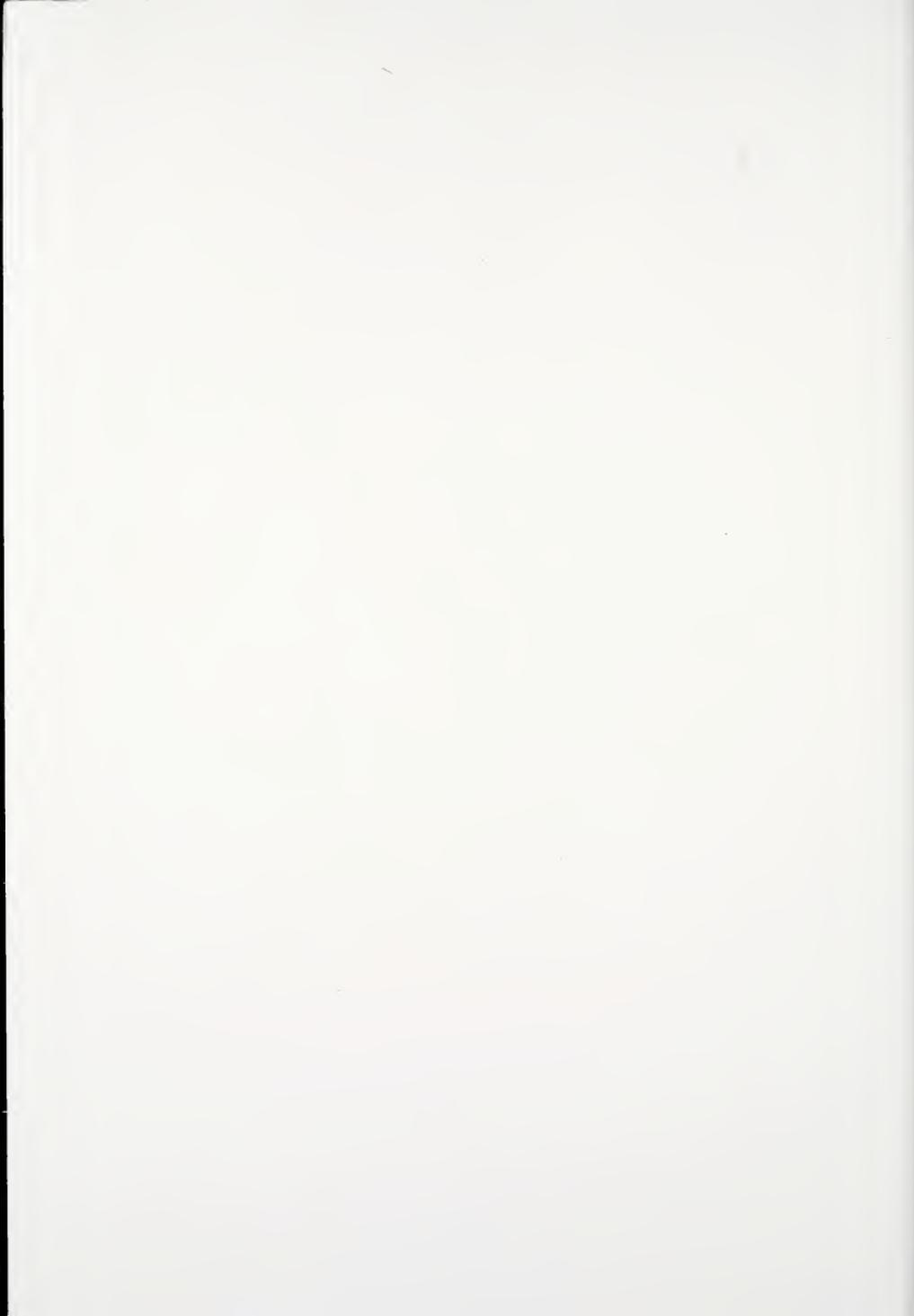


A woman with short, light-colored hair is dancing in a dark, moody setting. She is wearing a dark, ribbed, form-fitting dress. Her arms are raised, and she is leaning back, suggesting a dance pose. The background is dark and indistinct, with some blue and purple lighting visible.

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*A Liberal Arts Journal*

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Cover illustration: *Hope* by Cortney Clulow '98  
Oil on canvas, 73½" x 47¾"

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The *Washington College Review* is a liberal arts journal that seeks to recognize the best of undergraduate student writing from all disciplines of the College and to publish work deserving of wider availability to readers in the college community and beyond.





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## *Preface*



THIS IS A BIG MOMENT for the *Washington College Review*. We're in full color! And we celebrate other achievements. On September 4, 1997 the *Review* unexpectedly received gracious recognition from the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, I. Michael Heyman, in his Fall Convocation address, which is reproduced in this volume. Heyman praises the "quality of debate at Washington College" and urges the students to work for a "true coming-together of our many traditions without demanding that they blend into one undifferentiated mass." The essays in this volume of the *Review* represent new efforts by Washington College students to achieve this goal.

The creative writing editor, Professor Katherine E. Wagner, gives us an historical overview of the *Review*. No one better than she can tell the story of how the *Review* has grown over the past six years into a respected journal of student writing from all disciplines. Her energy and wisdom have guided all of us, students and faculty, alike. It is with keen regret that we accept her resignation from the *Review*. We appreciate all her years with us.

The humanities editor, Professor Donald A. McColl, presents innovative and impressive work by students in the fine arts and humanities. For the first time we are publishing an essay in a foreign language and reproducing graphic art of various mediums.

With this volume, the *Review* inaugurates a new internship experience for a student editorial and production assistant. Jennifer E. Lubkin '99 has taken much care to produce a journal of which we all can be proud.

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Finally, a word of appreciation to all the faculty who encouraged, helped, guided, trained, and cajoled the students to publish their work here.

Jeanette E. Sherbondy  
Editor

## *A Word from the Humanities Editor*



"...art speaks truth, indeed *is* truth, perhaps the only truth."

*Iris Murdoch (1919-)*

IT IS WITH PLEASURE that I write this note, which turns out to be more of a paean, for rarely is a teacher afforded the opportunity to heap such praise on his/her students, let alone celebrate the central role of the *arts* in the liberal arts. And if there is anything that the humanities submissions here demonstrate it is that the arts and the other academic disciplines go hand in hand.

Take Cortney Clulow's work. For her essay on the troubled fifteenth-century Flemish painter Hugo van der Goes, she went back some five-hundred years, crossed boundaries of class, gender, and religion, and drew from such diverse disciplines as art history, history, theology, and medicine in an attempt to come to grips with both Hugo's "madness" and subsequent suicide attempt, and how they relate to his extraordinarily powerful visual imagery—imagery, we soon find, articulating millennial concerns not so far from our own. That visual imagery is something Clulow knows a good deal about is evidenced by the arresting images she herself has made this past year and permitted us to reproduce in this issue. At a time when the very efficacy of painting as a medium is being questioned if not altogether abandoned, Clulow strives to create a meaningful visual language with which to express her thoughts about the relations between herself, her friends and family, and their place in the world—what I take to be an important corollary of a liberal arts education. Her work reminds us of the historical struggle of artists to extricate themselves from guild

and craft traditions and align themselves with the liberal arts (in the early Renaissance, for instance, grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music), a struggle that is, I suspect, fought anew as each passing generation seeks to redefine art's place in the world. Not content to let her paintings stand alone, Clulow wrote a humanities thesis that articulates and comments on her paintings, using different literary forms, an extract of which also appears in this issue of the *Review*.

Ed Geisweidt's work, by contrast, shifts the focus from the artist/genius/creator to audience, in a carefully argued study of communities of reading in early modern England. He properly reminds us of the pitfalls in merely assuming an audience for a literary work and that the reactions of such "communities" often become an integral part of a work's meaning. At the same time, he artfully demonstrates the clarity of thinking and expression that are the hallmarks of a liberal arts education. And yet Geisweidt, too, understands something of the artist's side of the equation; his award-winning senior obligation took the form of a thesis on Shakespeare.

In her study of Eugène Ionesco's *La cantatrice chauve* (1949), Bernadette Höfer tackles the question of interpretation—the extent to which and the manner in which the meaning(s) of texts are retrievable. She aptly demonstrates that Ionesco, in what might be called his "deconstruction" of language, looked forward to the influential work of such philosophers as Jacques Derrida.

Megan Wolff, for her part, is skeptical of received ideas, and using the critical apparatus of liberal learning, "deconstructs" historical views of women. Playing on such age-old stereotypes as Venus and earth-mother, Wolff questions current notions of what it is to be beautiful and shows how deeply historicized these notions are, in a culture all too often unaware of its debt to the past. Ironically, not that long ago,

Wolff herself would have been denied the chance to be an artist as a result of the very reproductive processes she explores, as it was widely believed as late as the turn of the twentieth century that a woman's biological make-up denied her the ability to reason and therefore to create art.

If it is true that art can change the world—and I and these, my junior colleagues, unquestionably think it can—then the world is in good hands.

Donald A. McColl  
Humanities Editor



# Trusting Each Other: Towards a Just and Civil Society



*Fall Convocation Address, Washington College, September 4, 1997*

**W**HEN I GOT A CALL from President Toll to come to a ceremony at Washington College, I thought I was about to receive the legendary Sophie Kerr Literary Prize. But then I realized that I was twice unqualified: first because, unfortunately, I am not an undergraduate at this fine college; and second, I have to admit I just don't have the requisite literary talent.

But apparently there were other reasons for President Toll to invite me here to speak to you at the opening of the academic year. And I am very honored that he did.

While preparing to come today, I had the pleasure of reading a number of your fine undergraduate publications: the *Review*, the *Collegian*, and, of course, the *Elm*. It's a lot more fun reading college papers when you are not yourself the object of some of the zingers, as I was during my years as Chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley.

In my reading, I learned a lot about Washington College. For example: that while you love your college's beautiful setting, its isolation from the bright lights occasionally inspires road trips to Washington, D.C.—I assume to visit the Smithsonian. I also learned of the colorful way you celebrate May Day around here.

On a more serious note, I was particularly impressed by the quality of debate at Washington College about what I consider a fundamental question for our society: the experience, the challenges, and the hope of diversity at the end of the twentieth century. I read one student's account of her sorrow and anger at what she saw as both hostility and indifference to the purpose of Black History Month. I read of other student who felt unfairly accused of racism. One fine article in the *Review*\* presented a cogent discussion of the issue of bilingualism in the schools, which spoke both of those who saw this as a strategy for inclusion of large groups of Americans and others who feared the possibility of fragmentation.

As a generation you are experiencing and trying to make work a too-long deferred goal of our society: a true coming together of our many traditions without demanding that they blend into one undifferentiated mass.

One size, we are discovering, does not fit all.

And you are doing so in a time when there are challenges to such ideas as affirmative action and other strategies—strategies that to my mind have worked—to open the doors of opportunity to all Americans and to bring them together on common ground. I consider my priority of promoting diversity on the Berkeley campus to be among my proudest achievements as chancellor. You can well imagine the pain I feel about current changes in that policy by the California Regents.

Opponents of policies to promote diversity often point to the very real problems that arise when people of different identities encounter each other. The debates in your student newspaper provide evidence enough that our coming together has not always been easy.

\*Jennifer Hammer, "English as the National Language: Ramifications in Social, Political, and Educational Circuits," *Washington College Review* 6 (1996): 21-29.—Ed.

But it continues to astonish me that the honest working out of these issues is not seen as true progress. Our country's continued vitality depends on our finding ways to live together productively.

If the alternatives are *denial* or, even worse, *suppression* of differences, how can we not see open debate and shared experience of each other as the *only* route to the healthy national community we seek for ourselves and for the generations to come?

But it is not enough just to come together, not enough to assert our own identities and to challenge angrily those with different perspectives. Confrontation is *not* the only mode available to us.

I wasn't young enough to be a participant in the undergraduate battles of the sixties. But at Berkeley I had a front seat. It was then that many began to argue that the only way to change things was to assault the assumptions and impugn the integrity of your opponents. Compromise and persuasion became dirty words.

I have never accepted this and I urge you as a rising generation to reject the ideas which have afflicted many in our society and *all* sides of the political spectrum: the *notion* that you alone are right; the *urge* to demonize those who disagree; the *goal* of intimidating rather than fostering discussion.

I know often much of this comes out of hurt or frustration. I know also that sometimes your opponents really do wish things that you cannot abide and you must say so. But more often there is simply honest disagreement. In the recent debate on the use of Ebonics as a strategy for education which raged in the nation and in the pages of your college paper, there were accusations by some that those who *opposed* it had malevolent intentions toward the Black community, and by others that those who *supported* it were trying to keep an entire community down. Often the goal was the same—to help a generation of inner city kids—but a difference in perspective led not to dialogue but mutual mistrust.

We have to find ways to live together, and not only that, also to appreciate what we each bring to the national mix. That's not a cliché, warmed up to serve at a convocation. That's the simple truth of our survival. Real inclusion is to see American society not as a zero sum game, with one community, one point of view gaining at another's expense. The key to our future is to broaden the definition of who we are as a people, to honor our differences, not to replace one narrow definition with another.

My belief in the need to foster the coming together of the diverse elements of our society has been reinforced by the three years I have served as Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. There we enjoy the opportunity to demonstrate strengths that each of the communities of America bring to our common experience as a nation.

When we've taken on *tough* issues, our curators have had to learn, sometimes the hard way, that respect for all points of view, not just our own, is critical to debate. I believe fundamentally that people are willing to consider new viewpoints and to honor other people's values and concerns as long as they don't have the sense that their own are despised. This is true of majority and minority cultures, of men and women, of younger and older generations.

It may seem strange to you that I have chosen to speak today not about some ideal future but rather about the process by which we take together and live together. But I believe that getting the process right is the key to a better future. We've got to keep working at programs and acknowledge differences and injustices that applaud the best in all of us, that recognize aspirations and allow people their best shot at realizing them. And we need to meet each other in an atmosphere of mutual respect. As President Clinton recently said, we have to stop talking "at each other" and begin talking "with each other."

The process of mutual respect and compromise is necessary to achieve any comprehensive goal. I was impressed by a recent state-

## INTRODUCTION

ment by Provost Scholz describing how your College was able to put together its ten-year strategic plan. "Fortunately," he said, "people were willing and able to make compromises and with compromise, we were able to establish *the necessary trust* to get the work done." It is true for Washington College as it plans for its future. It is no less true for America as we plan for our future together in a just and civil society.

Thank you.

I. Michael Heyman  
Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution



# Connections between Feminism and Pornography: A Senior Research Study



*Natalie Diane Smith*

**F**EMINISM AND PORNOGRAPHY. Two loaded words in our society, each meaning a different thing to every person. Taken together, these two words represent a debate that has been troubling women and men for at least sixteen years. Most would assume, based on stereotypes surrounding the movement and its followers, that all feminists reject pornography and would fight for its elimination. Others might wonder how the two words relate, if at all.

The feminist movement is divided on the issue of pornography. The anti-pornography feminists, led by such people as Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, believe that pornography is a “male invention”<sup>1</sup> that “should be suppressed because it leads to discrimination and violence against women.”<sup>2</sup> In all fairness, however, the anti-pornography feminists claim that they are not for censorship. Norma Ramos, an attorney present at the *Ms.* magazine pornography debate in 1994, states, “This movement has never advocated censorship. It advocates the elimination of sexual exploitation in all of its forms.”<sup>3</sup> Along these same lines, Andrea Dworkin, in the preface to her book *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, states, “The question this book raises is not whether the First Amendment protects pornography or should, but whether pornography keeps women from exercising the rights protected by the First Amendment.”<sup>4</sup>

The anti-censorship feminists appear to be split among themselves concerning the issue at hand. There are those who agree that sexually explicit materials are not always kind to women but do not want to censor them, which would deny people their First Amendment rights. Marilyn French, also at the debate, admitted, “There may be some of us in this room who would defend the First Amendment rather than see these magazines end—I’m one of them.”<sup>5</sup> The other side of this group, however, defends pornography for pornography itself. They believe that, while some of the material is damaging to women, sexually explicit materials do not cause harm to women and can be enjoyed by both sexes and used for their benefit. Nadine Strossen argues:

Defending the sexual expression that some feminists condemn with the dread *P* word is … a critical element in our support of free speech, sexual and reproductive autonomy, and women’s equality.<sup>6</sup>

Sallie Tisdale, in her article which views pornography from the point of view of a female consumer, writes, “I don’t believe there are limits to what women can imagine or enjoy. I don’t want limits, imposed from within or without, on what women can see, or watch, or do.”<sup>7</sup>

It is crucial to stop here and attempt to define pornography so that reader and writer will share the same understanding. *Womanwords: A Dictionary of Words about Women* explains that the word evolved from the Greek *porne* and *graphos*, forming *pornography*, a “writing about prostitutes.”<sup>8</sup> Around the nineteenth century, this definition changed, and pornography became “anything considered impure, obscene, or erotic.”<sup>9</sup> Feminists of the twentieth century are known for claiming that “pornography is the theory and rape the practice.”<sup>10</sup> Susan Brownmiller calls pornography a “male invention, designed to dehumanize women, to reduce the female to an object of sexual access,” while Gloria Steinem believes that “pornography is not about sex. It’s about an imbalance of

male-female power that allows and even requires sex to be used as a form of aggression.”<sup>11</sup>

In *Amazons, Bluestockings and Crones: A Feminist Dictionary*, another version of pornography is given. Ellen Willis says:

A woman who is raped is a victim; a woman who enjoys pornography (even if that means enjoying a rape fantasy) is in a sense a rebel, insisting on an aspect of her sexuality that has been defined as a male preserve.<sup>12</sup>

Also in this particular dictionary is MacKinnon’s and Dworkin’s definition of pornography as the “sexually explicit subordination of women, graphically depicted, whether in pictures or in words” with women (or men or children) exhibited as dehumanized sexual objects, people who crave pain or humiliation, people who experience pleasure in being raped, etc.<sup>13</sup>

A more neutral definition of pornography is stated in an article dealing with the link between pornography and rape myths: “material intended or expected to create sexual arousal for the receiver.”<sup>14</sup> More than one proponent of sexually explicit materials point out that most consumers of pornography do not rush out to buy the latest issue of the magazine of their choice to strengthen society’s view of women as inferior to men: they buy it because they are curious or because it is sexually arousing to them.<sup>15</sup>

It is for this reason that I chose to examine the issue of feminist beliefs and their connection to pornography for my senior thesis, entitled “Feminism and Pornography: Pleasure, Danger, and the Division of a Movement.” More specifically, I investigated the links between identification with feminism and attitudes towards pornography in young adults on a small college campus. I asked, “Is pornography merely a male manifestation, invented and sustained to make a commodity of the female body and to keep women in a subordinate position?” In

addressing this issue, Gloria Steinem states, "Men are the purchasers of pornography and the majority of men are turned on by it, while the majority of women find it angering."<sup>16</sup> One reason it might seem this way is because of anti-pornography feminists' fighting to have the material seen as entirely misogynistic. Those who call themselves feminists, or who feel they care at all about women, may be influenced by this struggle and tend towards this side of thinking, rather than be scorned by anti-pornography feminists as "...[becoming] the Man."<sup>17</sup> Another reason for viewing sexually explicit materials as "entertainment for men," as *Playboy* writes on its front cover, is the idea that males and females are taught to view sex differently.<sup>18</sup> However, I feel that our generation is generally more open to the discussion of sex and sexuality than those before us. I believe that this acceptance of sex, as well as the "permission" recently given to women to discover and understand their own sexuality, might lead to a higher tolerance of sexually explicit materials. A neutral statement by Kate Ellis, Barbara O'Dair, and Abby Tallmer, concerning the pornography debates among feminists, applies to this idea:

We live in a culture where sexual speech and behaviour for women is still severely restricted at an informal level. Thus, much of the debate about pornography has served as a way for women to talk about sex, and about sexual variation, explicitly and publicly for the first time.<sup>19</sup>

I entered my research attempting to determine if the rejection of pornography is a universal doctrine in the feminist movement. Is a woman who accepts pornography, then, not a feminist and, in fact, adopting male characteristics? Does our society need pornography to be abolished or simply altered to give women more power in the materials? If we know a person is a feminist, does this guarantee that we know she rejects pornography? My thesis looks at definitions of feminism and pornography, a background of the debate, and how each side of the debate uses feminism to its own advantage, to support its own views.

My first study, conducted in December of 1997, helped me define feminism and determine students' reactions to it. I held twenty-minute-long ethnographic interviews with nine students, seven females and two males. Questions asked included: What is your definition of feminism? In your opinion, what are feminists fighting for? How would you describe a feminist? And, do you consider yourself a feminist? The focuses of the present-day feminist movement, as seen by these students, are the elimination of exploitation and subordination of women; education of girls and women to encourage their potential; equal opportunities, rights, and responsibilities for women; an end to violence and oppression of women; and freedom for women to make choices concerning themselves, their bodies, and their thoughts. The answers I received helped me to develop an understanding of feminism through students' eyes, including how important the role of sex and sexually explicit materials are in the movement. The findings also helped me to create the Feminism Index for my later research.

My second study, conducted in the spring semester of 1998, sought to determine students' attitudes about both pornography and feminism. Survey questionnaires were distributed to one hundred randomly selected undergraduate students. Because the response was only 36 percent, the findings of the survey cannot be assumed to represent college students' attitudes as a whole.

Section one of the questionnaire attempted to measure respondents' tolerance of pornographic materials. The majority of these questions and scales were taken from a 1988 study conducted by Ilsa Lottes, Martin Weisberg, and Inge Weller.<sup>20</sup> In the 1988 study, patterns of pornography attitudes, including views on effects and regulations, were analyzed. Respondents were asked what their definition of pornography was, as well as how much exposure to pornography they'd had. The factors of gender, religiosity, and sexual activity were taken into account. The study was done at a university in the Midwest, and the subjects were students. The researchers believed that, because students represent this country's

future leaders, their opinions on sexually explicit materials would be of influence to future decisions made concerning the issue. Also noted was the fact that many college men are pornography consumers. Lottes et al. discovered that the majority of subjects believed pornography should be legal for adults and protected by the First Amendment. Nearly all men and women felt that both sexes could enjoy pornography as lessons for sexual techniques, to enhance the pleasure of masturbation, improve sexual relations, and release bottled-up emotions.<sup>21</sup> Those who were most against pornography were as expected: women, people who had never seen pornographic materials, the religious, and those who were not sexually active.

The Pornography Scales that were taken into consideration for the spring 1998 study were Assessment (what the student considered pornography), Seek (how often the student had actively sought out pornography), Use (how often the student used, read, or viewed pornography), Material Negative (how many negative attributes the student gave to sexually explicit materials), Material Positive (how many positive attributes the student gave to sexually explicit materials), Enjoyment (whether the student believed that both men and women could enjoy sexually explicit materials), and Personal Implications (what effects the student believed viewing pornographic materials might have on him or her).

Section two of the questionnaire asked demographic questions, so that I might determine what types of people my sample was composed of. Twenty six of the thirty six respondents were female; ten were male. The sample was made up of predominantly white heterosexuals. The majority of male and female respondents considered themselves at least "somewhat" sexually active.

Section three listed the Feminism Index, which was developed using the definitions and focuses of feminism that students gave during the first study. On an 80-point scale measuring identification with feminism, the female respondents scored an average of 59.3, indicating that they "agreed" with feminist beliefs (a score of 60 showed agreement).

Male respondents fell short of agreeing, with an average of 52.6 (a good distance from the “uncertain/don’t know” category, at a score of 40 points). When asked to respond to the statement “I consider myself a feminist,” the female respondents averaged a score of 2.23 on a scale of 4, showing uncertainty, while the male respondents averaged a 1.4, placing them between disagreement and uncertainty. Though the average male respondent identified with feminist beliefs and values, he did not consider himself to be a feminist.

That seven of the ten male respondents agreed and three of the ten strongly agreed with the Enjoyment scale indicates that these males do not consider sexually explicit materials to be for males’ eyes only. Among female respondents, seven of the twenty-six strongly agreed, and fourteen agreed with the Enjoyment scale. Most female respondents, then, believed that women can enjoy sexually explicit materials just as much as men. There were also female respondents who scored high on certain scales, including the Seek, Use, Material Positive, and Personal Implications scales, suggesting that there are women who enjoy pornography and other sexually explicit materials. The fact that, overall, female respondents’ amount of use of such materials does not, for the most part, follow this belief is telling. Perhaps women have begun to toy with the idea of using sexually explicit materials, but because society has not yet reached the point where this behavior in women is accepted as, to some extent, it is for men, these women are unable to make the next step, viewing or reading pornography when they so desire. Pornography, then, cannot simply be dismissed as a male phenomenon; women who read or view it must be taken into consideration when discussing the advantages, disadvantages, and regulation of it.

Because the research was carried out to determine what, if any, connection could be made between feminism and pornography, I was most interested in correlations between the Feminism Index (students’ identification with feminism) and the Pornography Tolerance scales. In male respondents, a moderate to strong correlation of  $r = 0.645$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) existed between the scores on the Feminism Index and on the

Material Negative scale. In other words, those males who scored higher on the Feminism Index tended to attribute more negative qualities to sexually explicit materials than did other males. This finding suggests that males who identified with feminist values and beliefs were more likely to see sexually explicit materials as negative or as possibly having harmful consequences.

Among male respondents, a somewhat significant correlation of  $r = -0.599$  between the Feminism Index and the Seek scale suggested that those males who identified with feminism were less likely to visit an adult bookstore with the intent of purchasing materials than those who did not visit such bookstores.

The statistically significant findings between the Feminism Index and Pornography scales were few in number. In female respondents, no significant correlations were found at all. Though this apparent lack of findings may seem disappointing at first, it can be interpreted to answer one of the original questions. Is the rejection of pornography a universal feminist doctrine? No; rather, feminists are indeed divided on the subject. If a person identifies with feminism, he or she may or may not enjoy pornography. If a person scores high on the Feminism Index, indicating an identification with feminist beliefs and values, this score will not predict what the person's scores on the Pornography Tolerance scales will be. Knowing a person is a feminist, then, will not allow us to know how this person feels about pornography. Making this assumption, that all feminists reject pornography as offensive and degrading to women, is in fact actively ignoring the many backgrounds and beliefs feminists bring to the movement. Making or believing assumptions does not do feminism justice because it eliminates a whole strain of thinking and narrows the movement's focus from equality and freedom of expression for all to a crusade against pornographic and sexually explicit materials.

Each side of the feminism and pornography debate seems to use to its advantage the aspects of feminism that support its views. The anti-

pornography feminists emphasize the degradation of, violence against, and further discrimination of women that pornography may cause. The anti-censorship or pro-sexually explicit material feminists focus on free choice and encouragement of sexual awareness and expression for women. Both sides, then, use values held by feminism to give credence to their views.

In considering both positions of the debate, it seems that feminists need to listen to and understand both sides of the story. We need to realize that pornography, though not necessarily a direct cause of violence against women, may lead its viewers to become desensitized and tolerant of sexual violence against women. We need to question the images we are seeing and the messages we take away from these images. Perhaps we also need to question the models in the pictures we are seeing: could it be that the woman or man posing before us was actually coerced into modeling? Is there a way that we can view their bodies without objectifying them?

We need to realize that different people have different likes and dislikes, and that what might sexually arouse one person will not do the same for another. We need to accept a person's right to view the sexually explicit materials they would like to view; otherwise, we may be infringing on their rights as human beings. We need to realize that some women refuse to have their right to sexual expression and sexual freedom denied by our patriarchal system any longer, and that these women may choose to exercise this sexual freedom by purchasing, modeling for, or producing pornographic materials. We need to stop insisting that a woman who enjoys pornography is "male-identified" and is therefore contributing to women's oppression.

Only after taking these considerations into account might feminists come to an understanding of the positions surrounding the debate. Only then might we not only hear the other sides, but listen to them, understand them, and use their messages to mend this division in the feminist movement.

## END NOTES

This article is a summary of Natalie Diane Smith, "Feminism and Pornography: Pleasure, Danger, and the Division of a Movement" (B.A. thesis, Washington College, 1998).—ED.

1. Jane Mills, *Womanwords: A Dictionary of Words About Women* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1993), 193.
2. Nadine Strossen, *Defending Pornography: Free Speech, Sex, and the Fight for Women's Rights* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 13.
3. "Where Do We Stand on Pornography?" *Ms.* 4 (1994): 36.
4. Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (New York: Penguin Books USA, 1989), lvi.
5. "Where Do We Stand?": 36.
6. Strossen, 15.
7. Sallie Tisdale, "Talk Dirty to Me: A Woman's Taste for Pornography," *Utne Reader* 58 (1993): 69.
8. Mills, 191.
9. *Ibid.*, 192.
10. *Ibid.*, 193.
11. *Ibid.*
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# Domestic Violence: A Prosecutor's Nightmare



*Katherine E. Vanderhoff*

**I**N TODAY'S WORLD, there is certainly no shortage of issues which are debated on a daily basis. With technology constantly firing "new and improved" advances in the faces of the people, the drastic social changes within the past twenty years, and the cultural adjustments Americans of every color and creed have had to make, society has not had the time to digest and to become comfortable with these new ways of thinking. Thus, there have been and still are times when values and attitudes clash, creating situations that Americans are not ready to or do not wish to deal with. This has been the case with the issue of domestic violence in our legal system for the past twenty years or so. Up until relatively recently, there has been an attitude of "it will never happen to me, so I will just ignore it" from most of the American public when faced with this problem. In the past, victims were typically too ashamed or too afraid to admit that they had been abused; so the legal system did nothing to combat domestic violence. This ignorant attitude has changed drastically since the 1970s and especially since the early part of this decade. There has been much activity in both federal and state legislatures concerning domestic violence, and prosecutors are beginning to take more of an active role in bringing the batterers to justice.

One such prosecutor, State's Attorney Susanne Hayman, recently prosecuted a very unusual domestic violence case in Kent County, Mary-

land. Although there are many factors which prosecutors ponder when making a decision about prosecuting certain persons, Ms. Hayman had three specific, important elements on her mind which made her decide to prosecute this particular case: her personal opinion concerning the guilt of the defendant; the fact that she believes that the prosecutor's office has the responsibility of setting examples for the society as to what will and will not be tolerated; and the positions, stated previous to this case, of the presiding judge.<sup>1</sup>

There are numerous definitions of domestic violence. One of the clearer and more concise definitions of this concept is "violence perpetrated by men against women with whom they have or have had an intimate relationship."<sup>2</sup> However, domestic violence is often defined by the relationship between the victim and the defendant, not simply by the crime committed. According to the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, it can include the following:

- a current or former spouse
- an individual who has a child in common with the abuser (even if not married and living separately)
- a cohabitant (someone who has lived with the abuser as a sexual partner in the same home for at least ninety days during the past year)
- a person related to the abuser by blood, marriage, or adoption, a parent, a step-parent, child, or step-child who has lived with the victim for at least ninety days during the past year
- a vulnerable adult (someone who lacks the physical or mental capacity to provide for his/her own daily needs)<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the many definitions of domestic violence, this concept also has many names. Among other things, it may be called spouse abuse, domestic abuse, domestic assault, battering, partner abuse, marital strife, dysfunctional relationship, and mate beating.<sup>4</sup>

Domestic violence has many varying characteristics. The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence has a listing of the more important properties of mate beating. This list includes the following facts:

- ninety-five percent of adult victims of domestic violence are women
- battering occurs in every racial and socioeconomic group
- batterers use violence as a tool to achieve power and control over their partners and children
- battering often increases in severity and frequency at the time of separation and thereafter
- over 50 percent of men who batter their partners abuse their children as well
- battered women and their children are often economically compelled back into relationships with batterers<sup>5</sup>

The most startling characteristic, which is also a statistic, is that the United States Department of Justice found that battering is the most common yet least reported crime in the United States.<sup>6</sup> This is especially horrifying to women who have experienced the frights of domestic violence. No one wants to be the first to speak up; in fact, many victims of domestic violence often request that the charges against their batterer be dropped. Their reasons for this vary in scope from fear for their personal safety to economic insecurity.<sup>7</sup> However, with such legislation as the Maryland Domestic Violence Act of 1994, it has become, at least in theory, easier for the victims to have the confidence to tell their stories.

The prosecutor plays a primary role in determining the criminal justice system's response to a case of domestic violence.<sup>8</sup> In the past, prosecutors usually complied with the victims' wishes because there was little additional evidence beyond the victim's testimony with which to prove the state's case. However, it is becoming clearer and clearer that

the only thing which will put a stop to the episodes of battering is some form of intervention.<sup>9</sup> This, coupled with emerging legislation, often enables state's attorneys to prosecute regardless of the position of the victim. In making the determination to prosecute, state's attorneys essentially have five goals in mind. They are:

1. To protect the victim from additional acts of violence committed by the defendant
2. To protect children from possible exposure to and/or injury from domestic violence
3. To deter the defendant from committing continued acts of violence in the community
4. To create a general deterrence to battering in the community
5. To vindicate society's interest in holding all criminals accountable<sup>10</sup>

State's Attorney Susanne Hayman admits that in her experience the standard procedure for prosecutors has been to drop the charges against the accused if the victim so wished. However, since she has been in office, she has requested that Kent County become part of what is known as "The Pro-Prosecution Initiative." This program currently comprises five counties in the state of Maryland. The Pro-Prosecution Initiative publishes a handbook for prosecutors which helps them to understand more about the crime of domestic violence. This understanding, in turn, teaches them how to fight it through the legal system. Partly because of the involvement Ms. Hayman has had with the initiative and partly because of her own beliefs, she chose to prosecute a very difficult yet typical domestic violence case, the case of the *State v. Edwin Eugene Wright*.<sup>11</sup>

This case seemed to begin almost identically to every other one. A man hit a woman and was arrested. The woman signed a domestic vio-

lence complaint against him. Two weeks later the couple got back together and the file ended up on Ms. Hayman's desk. It was solely up to her to decide whether or not to prosecute. Drawing from her own personal knowledge of the victim and defendant and her knowledge of the cycle of domestic violence, she decided to prosecute.

She began by meeting with the victim in hope of gaining some facts which would prove useful at trial. At her meeting with the victim, Ms. Hayman was under the impression that she had the victim's full cooperation. Ms. Hayman described the woman as being, "bright, attractive, and articulate." During this pre-trial conference, the victim told the state's attorney the version of the story which Ms. Hayman believed to be and still believes to be the truth. The victim told how the defendant and she had had an argument on the evening of March 13, 1997 (the night in question). She had accused him of infidelity; he denied ever having an affair. Looking for comfort, advice, and a safe haven for her young child, the victim took the child and drove to her friend's house nearby. Upon her arrival, the victim proceeded to explain her ordeal to her friend and asked to stay the night. The friend said yes and the victim returned home to gather a change of clothes for her and her baby. The friend advised her not to go back home because her enraged boyfriend was there. Nevertheless, the victim returned to her house, leaving her child in the custody of her friend.

Once she arrived at her house, she and the defendant proceeded to get into another argument. This time it was about their child. The defendant was angered because his girlfriend (the victim) was bringing outsiders into their private life. He convinced the victim to accompany him on a return trip to her friend's house in order to retrieve the baby. At the pre-trial conference, the friend described the defendant as being "outraged and angry." However, she returned their child to them and said nothing as the victim and the defendant walked back to their car. As the friend was turning to go back into the house, she believed she saw

the defendant backhand the victim across the face, a claim supported by the victim's original account told to the state's attorney. This alleged action formed the basis for the domestic violence charge. The friend immediately contacted the victim's brother, who then contacted their mother, who called the police.

This portion of the case is the most confusing part, because once the victim was called to the witness stand by Ms. Hayman on the original trial date, she changed her story completely. According to the state's attorney, this is not unusual in domestic violence cases. Many times, the victims and the defendants get back together before the trial (which is what happened in this case) and the victims, therefore, do not want to see their partner punished. Because of this complication, the case took longer than its allocated court time and the judge postponed the balance of the trial until September 30, 1997.

At this point, Ms. Hayman had the authority to dismiss the case. The reasons that she did not quit are specific. First off, Ms. Hayman relied on what most prosecutors rely on—her personal knowledge and opinion concerning the validity of the charge and the guilt of the defendant. Ms. Hayman's scope of authority extends throughout Kent County, a place she knows well. In some cases this could be unfortunate. In this case it proved to be helpful. From her personal acquaintances she gained insight into the relationship between the victim and the defendant. Others whom Ms. Hayman had no reason to doubt confirmed the victim's allegations of the defendant's infidelity. This gave Ms. Hayman confidence in the victim's original story. Also, from her involvement in the Pro-Prosecution Initiative, the state's attorney had learned of the cycle of domestic violence. She felt that if she did not do something to put an end to this situation while she had the chance, it would continue and possibly result in harm to the child.

A second factor which made Ms. Hayman continue the prosecution is that she considers "domestic violence to be a crime against the

community." She feels that the state's attorney's office has the responsibility to set examples for society. Ms. Hayman wanted to set the example that domestic violence will not be tolerated in Kent County and therefore felt the need to continue on with this prosecution.

The final factor which had a significant impact on her decision was the regular practice of the presiding judge to find the defendant not guilty if the victim does not testify against him/her or is otherwise uncooperative. Originally, the state's attorney thought that she had the cooperation of the victim, so she decided to prosecute. When the victim showed her other face, Ms. Hayman felt that she had to go on regardless of the judge's reputation for acquittal. She hoped to break both the cycle of abuse and the cycle created by the judge's decisions in cases similar to this one.

In the courtroom, during the second half of the trial, one could sense the growing tension. The state's attorney had offered the defendant a plea bargain during the interim between trials. The state wanted the defendant to attend counseling in return for a guilty plea. The defendant refused and demanded that the trial be continued. During the next half of the trial, the court heard the testimony of a friend of the victim, the police officers who were dispatched to the scene, and the defendant, in conjunction with a return of the victim to the witness stand.<sup>12</sup>

Ms. Hayman indicated her doubt that justice would prevail in this case. But, it did. One reason for this is that the judge allowed the state to admit an integral piece of evidence—the victim's original domestic violence complaint against the defendant. This was written and signed by the victim on the night in question. The victim testified at the second trial that she was coerced into signing the complaint. Her story was that the police advised her that if she failed to sign a complaint, she would lose custody of her child (in the event of her permanent separation from the defendant). Each policeman who took the stand denied this accusa-

tion of coercion. They testified that they had simply advised the victim of the totality of the circumstances, which can often become confusing in these types of cases.<sup>13</sup>

In the end, the defendant was found guilty of assault. He was sentenced to probation before judgment, supervised probation for twelve months, and a fine of one thousand dollars. Ms. Hayman wanted to ask the court for jail time; however, she feared that if she presented the court with an “all or nothing” situation, the court would tend toward the “nothing” option. Thus, she selected the middle ground to ensure that the defendant would receive some degree of punishment.

Domestic violence victims are gaining more and more courage and support to tell their stories as the years go by. Many states, including Maryland, are passing legislation against domestic violence and educating the public about this horrible crime. Domestic violence has many definitions, many names, and many awful characteristics. However, until recently, this information has been hard to come by. Domestic violence continues to be an especially difficult crime to prosecute because even in this era of enlightenment, the victim is often afraid or ashamed to tell the whole truth. Thus, many prosecutors have made it a common practice to drop some or all charges against defendants for lack of evidence. Prosecutors like Susanne Hayman are breaking out of this mold of ignorance by prosecuting defendants with or without the help of the victim. With programs like the Pro-Prosecution Initiative, attorneys are becoming more adept at handling domestic violence cases. Ms. Hayman has a strong commitment to upholding the values of society; moreover, she takes her personal knowledge and intuitions into consideration when making a decision to prosecute. Because of these factors, Ms. Hayman succeeded in convicting an abuser and breaking the continuing cycle of battering.

Domestic violence is an issue which is receiving more and more long-overdue attention. This crime is not only a crime against a person

but also against society as a whole. For this reason, society must help domestic violence victims tell their stories. Hopefully, in the years to come, progress will prevail and more prosecutors will have the courage to follow their "gut" feelings, just like State's Attorney Susanne Hayman did, so that these criminals will be punished. This is a serious issue which is far from being resolved. The American judicial system needs to stop, look, and listen to what the public needs. Women do not need to live in fear of their partners. Everyone needs to become more educated and less ignorant. It seems to me that Kent County, having a prosecutor like Susanne Hayman, is a step ahead of the game. She brought one more offender to justice, not by doing what was easiest or fastest, but by doing what was right.

END NOTES

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3. Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, *Pro-Prosecution Initiative* (Maryland: Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, 1996), 8:2.
4. McCue, 2.
5. Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, *Pro-Prosecution Initiative*, 8:2.
6. *Ibid.*, 3:2.
7. Office of the Attorney General and the Lieutenant Governor's Family Violence Council, *Stop the Violence: A Call to Action* (Maryland: Office of the Attorney General and Office of the Lieutenant Governor, 1996), 19.
8. McCue, 132.

9. *Ibid.*, 7.
10. Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, *Pro-Prosecution Initiative*, 8:1.
11. Unless indicated otherwise, all further references made in the text to the development of the case or State's Attorney Hayman's frame of mind are drawn from Hayman, interview by author.—ED.
12. Author's personal notes taken during the case of *State v. Edwin Eugene Wright* tried in the District Court of Kent County, Maryland; Judge Floyd Parks presiding, 30 September 1997.
13. *Ibid.*

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# La Tragédie du Langage dans *La cantatrice chauve* d'Eugène Ionesco



*Bernadette Höfer*

WITH HIS PLAY *La cantatrice chauve*<sup>1</sup> the Rumanian author Eugène Ionesco revived surrealism in France and became known as the most prominent author of Nouveau Théâtre (“New Theater”). In *La cantatrice chauve* Ionesco shocks and provokes his reader, destroying language in a “tragic way.” Playing with language and banishing any kind of significance, Ionesco’s characters do not only talk about banalities, but their language itself becomes automatic and absurd.

In *La cantatrice chauve* Ionesco attacks all levels of language in order to reveal its powerlessness. He disarticulates language on the phonological level through the stylistic means of repetition, reduplication, and onomatopoeia. Furthermore, his use of imagery and exaggeration contributes to the author’s desired aim to ridicule the banality and incoherence of man’s daily life. In order to translate his idea of incommunicability between mankind, Ionesco also destroys syntax. Sentences, without any link, are combined in parataxis so that the action itself becomes absurd. The reader cannot discern any plot, and scenes are in disorder, incoherent, or even repeated. Elements of decoration, the most important being the clock, are used to create disorder and incoherence within the dialogues. On the surface, the play seems comical and provokes laughter, but beneath the surface lie much deeper and hidden ideas. On

the one hand, Ionesco makes fun of the banality of the conversation manuals of the Assimil method, in which people are supposed to learn a foreign language through repetition of fixed sentences. On the other, the play conveys the philosophy of solitude and incommunicability among mankind. Humans live in solitude and are unable to communicate or understand each other. Each of them hides himself in his own created world, in his tower of Babel, and gradually stops thinking and reflecting. Humans become phantoms, easily abused and filled with slogans of a political, social, or philosophical nature. Whether victims of the Nazis, Communists, or other dictatorships, people have lost their personalities, and even more dangerously, their independent minds.

#### INTRODUCTION

Avec la création de *La cantatrice chauve* (1949), Eugène Ionesco réanime le surréalisme, mais en lui donnant une touche fraîche, un style nouveau, celui du Nouveau Théâtre. Les critiques sont unanimes que:

Dans *La cantatrice chauve*, M. Ionesco tondait la Joconde. Trente ans après l'extinction des feux du surréalisme, il rallumait pour cette opération, quelques quinquets, ramassait les confettis, les pétards, les masques oubliés sur la place publique, faisait sortir de leur lit, au son du cor, les fêtards prêts à croire que le sommeil les avait rajeunis.<sup>2</sup>

Qui est l'homme qui a exercé tant d'influence sur le théâtre français, qui a révolutionné la conception du théâtre, et qui a tant troublé les critiques pendant les années 1940 à 1970? Né en Roumanie en novembre 1912, Eugène Ionesco est le fils d'un père roumain et d'une mère française. Il passe toute son enfance à Paris, et après une période de 18 ans où il réside dans son pays natal, il retourne à Paris en 1938 pour y préparer une thèse sur « les thèmes du péché et de la mort dans la poésie française

depuis Baudelaire ».<sup>3</sup> Lui, qui a connu le cauchemar du nazisme et du fascisme, prend alors la décision de consacrer sa vie au théâtre pour aborder les sujets qui se trouvent au fond de son cœur. Le 11 mai 1950 *La cantatrice chauve* est représentée pour la première fois au théâtre des Noctambules.<sup>4</sup> Elle fait scandale, et ce n'est que *Rhinocéros* (1960) qui lui amène le premier triomphe et assure sa gloire et l'éloge des critiques. Dans *La cantatrice chauve*, Ionesco prête à ses personnages « un langage automatique, absurde et saugrenu »<sup>5</sup> qui remet en question le langage creux des manuels de conversation, tel que celui utilisé dans la *Méthode assimil*. Nous savons que l'auteur n'avait pas « une intention au départ, mais une pluralité d'intentions mi-conscientes, mi-inconscientes ».<sup>6</sup>

#### LA DÉSARTICULATION DU LANGAGE AU NIVEAU PHONÉTIQUE

Dans un premier temps, la désarticulation du langage se manifeste au niveau phonétique. Elle est d'abord traduite par de nombreuses répétitions que l'on retrouve tout au long de la pièce. Ce sont ces répétitions qui provoquent le rire et qui annihilent toute possibilité d'action progressive dans la pièce. Mais elles détruisent aussi toute possibilité de mouvement progressif dans la scène où la seule finalité consiste en la constatation de M. et de Mme Martin qu'ils sont mariés. Les répétitions font sans doute allusion à la *Méthode assimil* qui pratique la répétition de phrases fixes, afin d'enseigner à l'étudiant une langue étrangère. Ionesco s'en moque en lui reprochant sa banalité, son langage creux et son absurdité.

Dans un deuxième temps, Eugène Ionesco utilise le moyen stylistique de la réduplication pour démontrer l'incohérence du language. Toute la scène finale de *La cantatrice chauve* est « une variation sur la syllabe « ca », inlassablement répétée, ou plus souvent sur sa réduplication « caca », volontairement scatologique ».<sup>7</sup> Ainsi, des variations telles que « cascade » et « kakatoes », où la graphique différente doit confondre le lecteur

puisque la répétition est voilée, sont reprises.<sup>8</sup> Le langage est vidé de toute signification. Toute communication entre les personnages devient impossible. Le spectateur, lui, se retrouve stupéfait, mais aussi angoissé par le mouvement dynamique des variations phonétiques qui deviennent presque menaçantes:

[L]anguage is used almost physically, as a kind of bludgeon or blunt instrument, where in fact the border-line between word and gesture is almost erased, where the spectator is, to all intents and purposes, physically assaulted by the barrage of quasi-meaningless sounds emitted by the characters on the stage.<sup>9</sup>

L'apparence de néologismes, termes inventés par l'auteur, accentuent le caractère énigmatique du dialogue et démontrent une autre fois que la communication entre les personnages est brisée, qu'ils ne se comprennent pas les uns les autres. Les nouvelles créations de « cocardard »,<sup>10</sup> « néologisme forgé sur cocardier »,<sup>11</sup> ou de « polycandres »,<sup>12</sup> vident le langage de toute signification en jouant avec des sons phonétiques.

Finalement, l'aboutissement de la désarticulation du langage au niveau phonétique se manifeste dans la séance finale de la pièce, où les phonèmes deviennent de la pure onomatopée. De simples sons sont alignés de façon que tout le dialogue devienne mécanique, un automatisme incohérent qui met le spectateur mal à l'aise. Le rire provoqué par les répétitions précédentes se transforme en angoisse réelle. L'enchaînement des mots paraît devenir un mouvement méprisant, menaçant et dérisoire:

Mme Martin: Bazar, Balzac, Bazaine!  
 M. Martin: Bizarre, beaux-arts, baisers!  
 M. Smith: A, e, i, o, u, a, e, i, o, u, a, e, i, o, u, il!  
 Mme Martin: B , c, d, f, g, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, x, z!<sup>13</sup>

« Les quatre protagonistes ... ne se comprennent plus, s'entre-déchirent.

Le langage, enjeu du conflit, isole et blesse. »<sup>14</sup> Mais il afflige non seulement les personnages sur scène mais aussi le spectateur qui se rend compte de l'insignifiance de son propre langage et de l'incommunicabilité qui existe entre les hommes, dans tous les temps et dans tous les pays.

LA DÉCHÉANCE DU LANGAGE RÉALISÉE PAR  
LES FIGURES STYLISTIQUES

Eugène Ionesco utilise plus que des simples moyens phonétiques pour détruire toute communication possible dans la pièce. Il se sert non seulement des phonèmes mais aussi de nombreuses images. « Les sons prennent souvent le relais des images. Ils inventent l'image. Ils ont dans l'oeuvre de Ionesco une place importante, ils collaborent au jeu et au mouvement. »<sup>15</sup> Ainsi, les claquements de langue de M. Smith font partie du jeu scénique. Ils sont comme des cris qui traduisent sa réaction instinctive de défense.

Dans *La cantatrice chauve*, le feu joue un rôle important comme image grâce à son ambiguïté. Il désigne d'un côté « le désir charnel », de l'autre « la destruction ».<sup>16</sup> Le pompier demande aux Smith s'ils n'auraient « pas un petit feu de cheminée, quelque chose qui brûle dans le grenier ou dans la cave? Un petit début d'incendie, au moins? »<sup>17</sup> La réponse négative de Mme Smith, toute confuse, montre l'élément d'ambiguïté qui est impliqué. Il n'y a pas de désir charnel entre les époux Smith qui se sont perdus depuis longtemps et vivent dans l'isolation de l'incommunicabilité. L'image du feu traduit la situation entre les hommes qui s'isolent les uns des autres et ne se comprennent plus.

Un autre élément stylistique lexical utilisé par Ionesco est l'exagération de certaines situations, qui est menée à son aboutissement dans cette pièce précise. L'épisode des Bobby Brown<sup>18</sup> ou la thèse que lorsque l'on sonne, il n'y a personne à la porte<sup>19</sup> servent à démontrer l'absurdité du langage et de sa contradiction. Toutes valeurs, toutes banalités de la vie

sont prises en dérision et remplacées par des théories insensées et absurdes. Le langage peut blesser, comme dans la situation où M. Smith appelle sa femme son « petit poulet rôti »,<sup>20</sup> terme incongru pour s'adresser à son amour, et blessant au lieu d'être affectueux. C'est la dérision totale de la vie quotidienne de l'homme, banale et incohérente en elle-même.

#### LE DÉRÈGLEMENT DE LA SYNTAXE

Pour donner encore plus de poids à son intention de démontrer l'incommunicabilité entre les hommes, Ionesco attaque aussi la syntaxe. L'agencement des phrases révèle soit une coupure stricte, sans aucun lien avec la proposition précédente, soit une structure parataxique, où deux propositions indépendantes sont alignées au lieu qu'une des deux soit subordonnée. Dans un premier temps, Ionesco bannit les liaisons, de manière à ce que nous ne retrouvions que peu de conjonctions entre les phrases. « Des affirmations sémantiquement incompatibles sont proférées l'une après l'autre. Telle est la clef du titre. »<sup>21</sup> *La cantatrice chauve*, qui n'apparaît jamais dans la pièce, est seulement mentionnée par le pompier une seule fois, mais sans aucun lien logique au fil du dialogue et tout de suite oubliée:

A propos, et la cantatrice chauve?  
Elle se coiffe toujours de la même façon.<sup>22</sup>

La structure parataxique est aussi fréquente. Par exemple, le pompier n'utilise que des propositions indépendantes en parlant de son métier: « Je ne peux pas non plus. Il n'est pas Anglais. Il est naturalisé seulement. Les naturalisés ont le droit d'avoir des maisons mais pas celui de les faire éteindre si elles brûlent. »<sup>23</sup> Les liaisons sont bannies le plus souvent possible, non seulement dans la construction interne des phrases où les subordonnées sont rares, mais aussi dans l'agencement des phrases les unes par rapport aux autres. Toute affirmation paraît reversible.<sup>24</sup> Parfois,

la proposition suivante est contradictoire avec la précédente et frappe le spectateur par son paradoxe. Le langage ne crée ainsi plus un rapport entre les idées mais devient le témoin de leur discordance.

Ionesco lui-même a révélé qu'il a eu l'idée « de mettre, l'une à la suite de l'autre, les phrases les plus banales, faites de mots les plus vidés de sens, des clichés les plus éculés qu'...[il a] pu trouver ».<sup>25</sup> C'est Nicolas II, personnage dans *Victimes du devoir* qui traduit cette philosophie clairement en disant qu'il y a « de la contradiction dans la non-contradiction, de la non-contradiction dans ce que le sens commun juge contradictoire.... ».<sup>26</sup> Les contradictions brisent la communication et en font un « cadavre de mots ».<sup>27</sup>

#### L'ABSURDITÉ DE L'ACTION

L'action elle-même est absurde car l'agencement des scènes est fondé sur la contradiction. « Une scène nie souvent l'authenticité de la précédente. »<sup>28</sup> La pièce s'ouvre sur le couple des Smith qui ont diné ensemble et veulent aller se coucher: « Viens, nous allons éteindre et nous allons faire dodo! »<sup>29</sup> Le spectateur est alors frappé par l'arrivée des Martin et le fait que M. Smith leur dit qu'ils n'ont « rien mangé toute la journée. Il y a quatre heures que nous vous attendons. »<sup>30</sup> Tandis que les Smith ont décrit avec précision leur dîner dans la scène précédente, cette scène nie toute action passée et détruit par conséquent le fil progressif de l'action. De plus, Ionesco annonce à la fin que « la pièce recommence avec les Martin, qui disent exactement les mêmes répliques des Smith dans la première scène ».<sup>31</sup> C'est donc un véritable jeu circulaire où les personnages et les scènes sont interchangeables et partagent la même sorte d'incommunicabilité. Lorsqu'on a demandé à l'auteur d'expliquer sa pièce, il a dit « qu'elle était une parodie du théâtre du boulevard, une parodie du théâtre tout court, une critique de clichés de langage et du comportement automatique des gens ».<sup>32</sup> Il a eu l'idée de créer une « anti-

pièce »,<sup>33</sup> comme l'indique le sous-titre, pièce qui contredit toutes normes de composition. Dans une conversation avec Nicolas Bataille, qui voulait faire jouer la pièce de Ionesco, l'auteur lui dit alors:

J'ai cru que cette pièce n'était pas scénique jusqu'au moment où j'ai lu *Les exercices de style* de Raymond Queneau. Ce que j'avais fait n'était, alors, peut-être pas totalement stupide. Dès le début, j'avais eu une intention très précise qui était de faire une parodie du théâtre. C'est pour cela que j'avais mis en sous-titre: 'anti-pièce.'<sup>34</sup>

Cette anti-pièce ridiculise l'action progressive du théâtre classique et se révolte contre toute construction logique. Ionesco renonce à la progressivité de l'action et à toute cohérence, à tout lien. C'est une véritable parodie qui s'offre au spectateur.

L'ambiguïté joue un rôle significatif dans l'intention de Ionesco de rendre la pièce absurde. Ce sont « les éléments du décor, pendule, sonnette, [qui] créent un effet de discordance par rapport au dialogue ».<sup>35</sup> La pendule est un bon exemple pour illustrer l'aspect de l'ambiguïté car elle est présente tout au long de la pièce et s'aliène de toute réalité et de toute rationalité. Parfois elle sonne « dix-sept coups » tandis que Mme Smith constate qu'il est « neuf heures ».<sup>36</sup> Parfois, « la pendule sonne sept fois. Silence. La pendule sonne trois fois. Silence. La pendule ne sonne aucune fois ». <sup>37</sup> Elle sonne même « 2-1 ». <sup>38</sup> Il y aussi une différence dans son amplitude car elle peut souligner les répliques, « avec plus ou moins de force, selon le cas »<sup>39</sup> et « si fort qu'il doit faire sursauter les spectateurs ». <sup>40</sup> Elle est incontrolable. On ne peut pas se fier à elle car « elle a l'esprit de contradiction. Elle indique toujours le contraire de l'heure qu'il est ». <sup>41</sup> Elle suggère qu'il n'y a pas de certitude possible, que « tous les codes échafaudés pour établir une communication sont détraqués ». <sup>42</sup> Ionesco prononce à travers la pendule sa philosophie que le temps objectif est ressenti différemment par chacun, par ses différentes expériences.

Finalement, l'action devient absurde par l'automatisme des dialogues par lequel Ionesco renforce l'annihilation de toute psychologie dans les personnages et en fait des simples marionnettes.

Les personnages en [la psychologie] sont dépourvus. Ce sont des modèles, des archétypes de la petite bourgeoisie.... Ces personnages représentent l'homme pris dans ses conformismes, vivant d'une façon automatique et mécanique.<sup>43</sup>

Leur façon de parler devient de plus en plus agressive et hostile<sup>44</sup> mais en même temps « traînante, monotone, un peu chantante, nullement nuancée ».<sup>45</sup> C'est par cet automatisme qu'aboutit l'absurdité de l'action.

#### LA « SOLITUDE À DEUX » OU L'INCOMMUNICABILITÉ ENTRE LES HOMMES

Quel est le message de la pièce? Cette pièce, ironiquement présentée comme une série d'exercices destinés à des étudiants américains qui apprennent le français, souligne le fait que les embûches qui foisonnent dans le langage, souvent masquées par la routine, surgissent dès qu'un locuteur passe s'une langue à une autre, expérience qui fut celle de Ionesco pendant toute sa jeunesse.<sup>46</sup> *La cantatrice chauve* ridiculise certainement la banalité du langage des manuels de conversation, telle que dans la *Méthode assimil*. Dans ces manuels, on apprend une langue étrangère par la répétition de phrases fixes qui se rapportent à des vérités plates.

Il ne suffit pas de considérer la pièce uniquement sous l'aspect de la dérisio[n] des manuels. Ionesco découvrit, en écrivant cette oeuvre, qu'elle se transformait en quelque chose de plus significatif, de plus didactique, d'une vérité au-delà de son intention initiale. Soudain, il fut « pris d'un véritable malaise, de vertige, de nausée. De temps à autre, j'étais obligé de m'interrompre, [et] tout en me demandant quel diable me forçait de continuer d'écrire. »<sup>47</sup> La parodie du théâtre prend donc une dimension

plus tragique et contient un message fondamental pour l'homme. Le lecteur hésite souvent entre le rire ou un sentiment de nausée. Les paroles incohérentes projetées par les protagonistes ont une implication souvent menaçante, dû au fait que le langage devient « inapte à assurer la communication ».<sup>48</sup> La pièce porte sur l'incommunicabilité entre les hommes: le langage, dénué de toute fonction, place l'homme dans un état de solitude cruelle. L'automatisme des conversations montre quels personnages sont dépourvus de toute psychologie. Mais ces personnages « représentent l'homme pris dans ses conformismes, vivant d'une façon automatique et mécanique ».<sup>49</sup> Tels que les deux couples de la pièce se trouvent être étrangers, l'homme en général vit dans la solitude et est non seulement séparé des autres mais aussi « séparé de lui-même ».<sup>50</sup> L'homme en général vit une vie monotone de l'anodin et de l'habitude dans le train-train quotidien, où les banalités substituent toutes réflexions psychologiques et philosophiques profondes. Les hommes s'habituent à ne plus penser pour devenir graduellement des « personnages sans caractère. Fantoches. Etres sans visage. »<sup>51</sup> Il faut se méfier de rire de la pièce car le rire se transforme rapidement en délire, en cauchemar. Derrière le voile du comique est forgée la tragédie du langage qui déplore « le drame de la solitude à deux »,<sup>52</sup> qui existe dans notre société.

#### CONCLUSION

Dans *La cantatrice chauve*, Eugène Ionesco confronte les spectateurs à une véritable « tragédie du langage ».<sup>53</sup> Il ne se contente pas de le désarticuler dans le domaine phonétique, mais le vide aussi de toute sa signification, par l'emploi habile de figures stylistiques aptes à ses fins. Il annihile aussi toute la mécanique syntaxique de la pièce. Finalement, Ionesco mène à l'aboutissement de son idée de la déchéance du langage en rendant l'action elle-même absurde dans l'agencement des scènes, les quiproquos, l'ambigüité. Il se sert du langage pour évoquer sa philosophie de la solitude et de l'incommunicabilité que l'on retrouve entre les hommes. Ses personnages, des types interchangeables au lieu d'être dôtés

d'une psychologie profonde, vivent la « solitude à deux ». Les époux sont des étrangers l'un pour l'autre, incapable de communiquer ou de se comprendre. Chacun vit dans son petit monde, dans sa tour de Babel, en dehors de toute vie réelle. « Ce sont des gens qui n'existent pas »,<sup>54</sup> puisqu'ils ne pensent pas. On peut en abuser facilement, car la platitude de leur langage et de leur caractère peut servir d'arme politique, sociale ainsi que philosophique:

Man has signed his abdication; within there resides a void, a nothingness, to be filled by words and slogans, until the slogan becomes the whole man, transforming Mr. Smith, at the whim of fate, at one moment into Mr Martin, at the next into an 'ideologist,' a Nazi, a Brechtian, a sectarian dictator, a rhinocéros, a master of the concentration camps.<sup>55</sup>

Le danger réside dans le fait que l'homme ne pense plus mais se fie à des simples slogans. Il perd désormais toute sa personnalité, même toute son humanité et se transforme en une bête, un rhinocéros qui crée un danger pour le monde entier.

#### END NOTES

1. Eugène Ionesco, *Théâtre I* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954).
2. Philippe Sénart, *Eugène Ionesco* (Paris: Éditions Universitaires, 1964), 26.
3. André Lagarde et Laurent Michard, *XXe siècle* (Paris: Bordas, 1973), 587.
4. Sénart, 24.
5. Lagarde et Michard, 587.
6. Eugène Ionesco, *Notes et contre-notes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), 143.
7. Marie-Claude Hubert, *Eugène Ionesco* (Malesherbes: Éditions du Seuil, 1990), 66.
8. Ionesco, *Théâtre I*, 53.

9. Richard N. Coe, *Eugène Ionesco* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), 41.
10. Ionesco, *Théâtre I*, 54.
11. Hubert, 66.
12. Ionesco, *Théâtre I*, 50.
13. Ibid., 55.
14. Hubert, 66.
15. Simone Benmussa, *Eugène Ionesco* (Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1966), 44.
16. Ibid., 50.
17. Ionesco, *Théâtre I*, 41.
18. Ibid., 22.
19. Ibid., 36.
20. Ibid., 25.
21. Hubert, 66.
22. Ionesco, *Théâtre I*, 51.
23. Ibid., 42.
24. Hubert, 68.
25. Ionesco, *Notes et contre-notes*, 65.
26. Hubert, 65.
27. Ionesco, *Notes et contre-notes*, 65.
28. Hubert, 69.
29. Ionesco, *Théâtre I*, 25.
30. Ibid., 33.
31. Ibid., 56.
32. Ionesco, *Notes et contre-notes*, 143.
33. Ionesco, *Théâtre I*, 2.
34. Hubert, 69.
35. Ibid.
36. Ionesco, *Théâtre I*, 19.
37. Ibid., 22.

38. Ibid., 29.
39. Ibid., 33.
40. Ibid., 31.
41. Ibid., 47.
42. Hubert, 69.
43. Benmussa, 75.
44. Cf. Ionesco, *Théâtre I*, 53.
45. Ibid., 26.
46. Hubert, 73.
47. Ionesco, *Notes et contre-notes*, 159.
48. Hubert, 71.
49. Benmussa, 75.
50. Ibid., 76.
51. Ibid., 83.
52. Ibid., 76.
53. Ibid., 73.
54. Ionesco, *Notes et contre-notes*, 160.
55. Coe, 47–48.

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# An Excerpt from “Six Voices and None: Literary Translations of Six Portrait Paintings”



*Cortney Clulow*

## P R E F A C E

this is sacred. this is what I have made my religion, my something to hold onto.

I've been told that there is no god. I've been told that families are nothing but zygotes and DNA. I've been told that my body is a machine. I've been told that there's nothing to believe in and there's nothing to be certain of. I've been desperate and screaming.

this is what I have written 40 to 80 pages on. this is what I want to stand behind my name in some black record book in some old building.

I am made of connection, human connection. I am the possibility of connected minds.

what I have written is what is sacred. I've been told and told and told and told—four years. what is strong enough to tell all this knowledge is nothing without connection. if I am alone, I am nothing.

this is sacred because I feel it. I know it with everything. these are pictures, voices, touches; this is blood, breath, life. I have it here, on these pathetic pieces of whitened wood. dead tree to carry my certain

sacredness to you, to your eyes. this is now an attempt to connect you to me, to all of me, all these minds, and not just now, not just one now lodged in the juices of your skull, of my skull. this is beyond. this will trip you into me and a million possibilities of who you could be in all the next moments you will know.

#### INTRODUCTION

The following body of text corresponds to a visual thesis presented in April, 1998, in the Larrabee Arts Center gallery of Washington College. This textual thesis is not intended to stand alone; the reader should come to this text with a vivid knowledge of the visual thesis. If she is not familiar with the visual thesis, reproductions of the six oil portraits have been attached to the manuscript. Reproductions of the other pieces have not been included. It is my belief that the portrait paintings encompass the scope of all the other works.

Portraiture is the unifying theme of the visual thesis. Likewise, portraiture is featured in the following text. However, portraiture is understood as the depiction of a categorical identity without being restricted to the physical likeness or mimesis of a particular person.<sup>1</sup> All of my work is subjective; everything I've done reflects the slant of my own specific point of view. Although I attempt to present identities outside of myself, I know that my own identity will taint any pure objective that could be imagined. With this point in mind, it is possible for me to claim both theses as self-portraiture.

As my visual thesis includes a variety of mediums, the textual thesis also incorporates a variety of writing styles, forms, and techniques. Each of the three main sections of the thesis is written in a different literary form: in essay, poem, and question/response. Formality and convention are subverted in each section. I hope that the reader will hear changes in my voice throughout the manuscript. Cer-

tainly, the voices of the five subjects in the final section will sound quite different from my own.

The sections each aim to illustrate a number of categorical identities. This implies that the identities will be distinct. My intention is that, while they may seem distinct in isolation, they will not be distinct when presented in an assemblage. One of many themes addressed in my thesis is the relationship between the parts and the whole. Ultimately, the part, or the individual, cannot be understood in isolation of the whole. In other words, none of these categorical identities describe the discrete identity of a specific person. It has already been noted that my identity will taint all of the others. Many other overlaps and codependencies will be apparent. It should be noted that all of the subjects know one another and interact on some level with each other.

The first section, "The Artist's Readings of Six Portrait Paintings," is a body of six essays which corresponds to the six oil paintings presented in the visual thesis. At certain points, the formality of the essays erodes to the level of confidential journal entries. There is a definite war within me between formal and personable styles of writing. These essay-journals function as readings of the oil paintings, but they also expose the inner workings of my mind. This first section reveals a portrait of myself to partner the five poems and the five questionnaires of the latter two sections.

I began each oil portrait knowing the certain feeling that I aimed to embody. The exact form of the painting wasn't known beforehand; all the creative decisions I made needed only to be consistent with that certain feeling. This means that I didn't always know how each color or form was specifically functioning, I only knew if it was consistent with the certain feeling with which I began. My readings of the paintings are not descriptions of what each painting is about or what each painting means. Rather, they are analyses of how the color and

form of each image functions for me, how—for me—they register a specific feeling. My goal with the paintings is to communicate the presence of six people as an experience of six discrete emotional reactions. The readings describe how I worked toward this goal.

The second section presents five portrait poems that I wrote for each of the subjects in the paintings—*save myself*. These poems were used to stimulate imagery for the portraits and were incorporated in a photo collage that I used in the visual thesis. While the form of the poems and their lack of capitalization may seem somewhat untraditional, the mechanics of the poems remain familiar. My voice, as the voice of the speaker, should be recognized as a sixth, implied subject in this section.

“Five Questionnaires and Responses,” the last section of the text, should be read as a type of primary source. I submitted a questionnaire and an audiocassette to each person that I painted—*save myself*. I requested that they record their responses to my questions onto the tapes, and I later transcribed each of their responses. The questions asked are specific to each person and at the same time, they are questions that I ask myself. In my life, each one of these people gives me answers and makes me more whole. I have tried to present them in a very specific way with the questions I asked, having anticipated their responses. Their responses are no more true portraits than the poems or the paintings. It is important to remember that I asked the questions and I am the voice to which each person is responding; this last section is no less subjective than the former two.

On a couple of the tapes, the subjects asked me why I was trying to expose them. In truth, both theses projects felt unbearably awkward at times because of this question. Do I have the right to expose these people that I hold most closely? I do, only because each person gave me that right and cooperated with me to make my theses. Everything I have submitted has the approval of my five friends. Why

have I done this? The preface presents my answer: my theses are celebrations and explorations of connection. Human connection has grown to be the most singularly valued dimension of my life.

Foremost, however, I present a portrait of myself with these theses. Because of my own subjectivity, I have not truly presented portraits of my friends; rather, I have presented portraits of my perception of these five people. No one could begin to understand their complexities through my work. In an agonizing way, the two driving forces, connection and self-expression, battled against one another in both painting and writing. The hours that I put into my work were hours I took away from my friendships. Ironically, I put more distance between myself and the people I cared about, even as I celebrated the connection between us.

This following text will not be a one-sided lecture. I will not report my findings or deliver conclusions. The thesis is meant to engage you and stimulate reaction. I ask that you really experience what you are about to read rather than spend your time effortlessly digesting words. Only then will I have accomplished anything at all with this work.

THE ARTIST'S READINGS [OF ONE] OF SIX  
PORTRAIT PAINTINGS<sup>2</sup>

*HOPE, OIL ON CANVAS, 73½" x 47¾"*  
[see the cover illustration of this volume]

This painting began in high school as my first large-scale acrylic painting. The high school painting depicted two abstract, life-size figures. The background figure was painted in warm colors and stood straight with his arms reaching downwards, trying to catch the foreground figure. The foreground figure was painted in cool, corpse-like colors,

and was falling downwards, into a hole. A textual passage was painted in black across the top:

HE LOST HIS GRIP, AND FELL./ THE FIELD  
OPENED UP/ AND SWALLOWED/ HIM WHOLE/ I  
TRIED TO HOLD ON, BUT SOMEHOW/ I LOST  
MY STRENGTH/ SO FAR SO DEEP/ I NEVER/  
HEARD HIM HIT/ HIS MOUTH BURST OPEN,  
SCREAMING/ I TRIED/ TO CATCH HIM/ BUT I  
MISSED. I THINK HE/ WAS HALF DEAD ALREADY

The painting dealt with movement and gestural expression. It was extremely flat and stylized. I hoped that this minimalism would reinforce the text and the expressive treatment of the figures. Above all, the painting dealt with hopelessness, failure and solitude. I made it during a period of my life when all my friendships seemed weak and superficial, when I felt that I could no more keep anyone else alive than anyone could keep me from dying. In the painting, I am not showing a literal death but, rather, a spiritual death. In my mind, spiritual death may be more tragic than literal death.

I began to hate the high school painting. If I see most people pass over something I make, expressing no interest, I also lose interest. I intend for my work to communicate, to engage. No matter how much it speaks to me, no matter how much I react to my own work, all my interest is jeopardized by the disinterest of others. My freshman year, I hung the painting in my dorm room, just to add some color to the place. Afterwards, it sat in my room at home, image facing the wall. Before starting my thesis project this year, I ripped the old canvas off its stretcher. I rolled the canvas up and now the high school painting is under a couch in my room. My father really likes the painting; I gave it to him, but he has nowhere to put it. He says it's too depressing for him to hang up at work.

My parents are always telling me that my work is too depressing, that I should make more positive, brighter paintings, write happier poems, dress in nicer clothes. For me, I have more interest in working with darker themes. My mind usually runs along darker themes. When I see work by other people that addresses these sorts of dark themes, rather than reinforcing my melancholy, it invigorates me. I see that I'm not alone and that other minds are similar to mine. I feel a celebration inside of me and feel a great interest in these other people's work. This is what I want for myself. I want to make paintings and poems so that other people will recognize me and be drawn close. These people will think similar thoughts as I and all the solitude and mourning will be cast away. I will be a part of something larger, a body of many separate people who resonate together and are homogeneously understood.

Stacie's painting is made over the stretcher of my high school painting. Since high school, I have found a body of many people that share much of the same sadness and frustrations as I. They also share many of the same sources of joy and celebration. Stacie's painting addresses this newfound community of interconnected, intense friendships. Her painting expresses hope. The mental image of Stacie that I have formed over the years (I've known her since high school) is a composite of the desires and beliefs that she has expressed. I have also impressed an image from my own experiences upon her; she is the abstract vision of pure clean beauty that has inspired so many men to paint, to write, and to compose. She is Beatrice, Helen, the Virgin Mary, and so many other countless names following in this tradition—the tradition of men who would love a woman as a pure symbol of beauty and gentle love. Sickenly, I know I have seen her in this unreal, not-quite-human way. I know that I continue to see her in this way. However, she has darkness and torture inside of her to balance all her gentleness. She has nightmares that pale my worst morbid

fantasies, fears that lay a hold of her to which I have never been prey, paranoias that I can dismiss to which she must slavishly succumb. She is not weaker than I am; rather, her reality is made of more biting substance.

Taking what I know of Stacie—her love of nature, her eagerness to yield all of herself to the happiness of another, her desire for a simple life where confusion, misunderstanding, and twisting hate are displaced—I have imagined her symbolically into form and color. Water, tree branches and leaves, the dragonfly, the pier, Scott and Stefanie are all used as symbols that correlate to aspects of Stacie's life. I have used them together in the painting in an attempt to form a composite unit.

The natural imagery reflects Stacie's love for the fecund, green world. Thriving nature, suggested by the trees in the painting, has the ability to heal her and allow her to reaffirm a belief in simple goodness and balanced harmony. The pier and the water at the bottom of the painting symbolize Stacie's desire to live surrounded by water; she finds land suffocating. I believe that she is also attracted to the vitality of water and wind and their ability to defy mankind's control.

The dragonfly, one of the main images in the painting, has a multifaceted role. While Stacie's main figure is soft, aglow, and bending, the dragonfly is rigid and dark. The dragonfly is one of Stacie's personal symbols which I have appropriated for her portrait. I have used it as a symbol for myself and anyone else who loves Stacie. As an insect of the Odonata order and Anisoptera suborder, the mature dragonfly is cold-blooded and uses the sun as an energy source. In the morning, on the bank of a river, you will see dragonflies clutching the reeds, wings outstretched. They sit there in the sunlight, waiting for heat to be absorbed through the veiny membrane of their wings, waiting for their body temperature to rise to the degree needed for flight. I use Stacie as a source of invigoration and inspiration, like the energy of the sun.

Stacie offers her life energy as an act of love, mainly to three other people: her twin sister, Stefanie; her companion, Scott; and myself. She sacrifices her own happiness for others and for the sake of future goals. The posturing of the main figure, her nudity, and the peaceful expression of her face, depict the comfort and ease with which she martyrs herself. By eliminating her body hair, I've hoped to suggest youth and purity, as well as untraditional beauty—almost otherworldliness. The repetition of form between the spinal column and the dragonfly's abdomen suggests a deep interconnection between the insect and the human. I knew that, for certain people, the dragonfly could suggest a crucifix or a phallus. However, the acceptance conveyed in Stacie's body posture should challenge these particular readings. Careful study and one's overall emotional response should guide the viewer away from a sexual, parasitic, or masochistic reading. Regardless, I welcome such associations; I myself often confuse Stacie's selflessness as submission.

Portraits of Scott and Stefanie are included in Stacie's painting because I really believe that she can only be understood in the presence of these two people. Scott and Stacie are seen in a light-blue haze, embracing. Scott holds Stacie behind him, protectively; he openly meets the viewer with a smile. Stacie's eyes are closed and she rests against Scott, trusting and sure of his strength. Stefanie's face is hidden in darkness to the immediate right of the main figure. She is attractive and mysterious, but incorporeal. There is a deep love between these two twins, but their connection is not manifest. I did not include myself in the painting; I made this image of Stacie as an alternate self-identity. As is the case with each of these portraits, *Hope* explores a certain aspect of myself that I recognize in someone else. Self-sacrifice, hope, childlike purity, and faithful, trusting love are facets of a certain identity common to both Stacie and me.

Speaking strictly of composition, the central image is intended to dominate. The branches above and the water below, the darkened

corners, and the diagonal lines of the legs, the forearms, and the pier should encourage the viewer's eyes to experience subtle circular movement. The painting is intended to feel self-contained and vital, echoing my perception of Stacie and her world. The canvas is divided in two by the dragonfly's body and the rightmost edge of the pier. The left side, Scott's side, is lighter and more active; it represents Stacie's extroversion. The right side, Stefanie's side, is darker and more empty, representing Stacie's introspection and broodiness.

At one point, I decided to title five of the paintings using lines from the five portrait poems written in the Back Book, a photo and poetry collage included in the visual thesis. I did not write a poem for the sixth painting, my self-portrait. The five poems are read from a small book, whose spine is fixed to the vertical center of a large photo of my back. This positioning allows my back to background all the poems. By this, I mean to suggest that all five poems can be understood autobiographically. *Asleep in Moonlight* was the title I had chosen for Stacie's painting. In the poem, the entire line reads "while I lie asleep in moonlight"; it is the final line. I intended for anyone familiar with the poem to be confused by the removal of the subject from the line. In the painting, the main figure, who does not appear to be me, may be asleep in moonlight. Am I to be understood as the main figure? Another twist: because of my pale skin, moodiness, and facial structure, people have often associated me with the moon. Is Stacie asleep in my light? Am I asleep in my own light? Or if you play with words ... Stacie Lee Pierpoint ... Sta Lee Pier ... SLeeP ... Sleep in Moonlight (Stacie Lee Pierpoint in Moonlight). Now, substitute "and" for "in," drop "light" from "Moonlight" ... Sleep and Moon. Double portrait?

In the end, I decided to use the more abstract title: *Hope*. When Doug Hanks of the College Relations Office requested information for a press release I submitted the following information:

I've been having a tough time coming up with titles. Because the paintings are so complicated, I've been wary to tack on very specific titles. Stacie's portrait, the dragonfly painting, and *Asleep in Moonlight* have all been names at one point ... I will give you the title *Hope* which has been the favorite since conception. It is vague enough to allow many different readings of the painting while discouraging sexual or overly morbid readings.

Description: Oil on canvas, 73" x 48". A surrealistic portrait collage of Stacie Lee Pierpoint. The dominant image is a dormant young woman with no hair, no clothes, and a glowing translucent torso. She is presented full figure in three-quarter perspective, centered, and suspended above water and a wooden pier. A four-foot dragonfly is positioned overtop the figure, its abdomen aligned to her spine, its head just below hers. Its wings overlap the outstretched arms of the figure. The large left eye in the foreground and the left edge of a woman's hairline in the upper left corner imply a view inside this person's mind. Portraits of Scott Dobrosielsky and Stefanie Pierpoint are also integrated.

I include these two paragraphs now to demonstrate how I represent my work when considering public reception. The title and description were not used in the press release. I imagined that they would be used and was careful to give disinterested, cold information to the imagined audience. Why? Why did I assume that it would be more acceptable to describe the image in terms of concrete imagery rather than as a narrative or an emotion? If I described the painting in concrete imagery, I imagined the readers of the release would come to the painting with the same information as anyone who hadn't read the release. And I changed the title to *Hope* because I knew that *Asleep in Moonlight* would not be understood in its fullest context by someone who hadn't read the portrait poetry and didn't know my personal

history. To make the painting more accessible to others, I tried to disentangle the title from the personal meaning the painting has for me.

Why should I try to disentangle my own personal meaning from the painting? What else is there besides my personal meaning? Every part of the painting has personal meaning; it's made of me. If everyone else is made of similar or at least compatible stuff, then my own personal meaning will not block anyone from accessing my painting. I can't communicate my personal meaning to anyone, even if I try. The work I do, the work anyone does, is never universal; it is always subjective. I tell myself this. I tell myself that even now I should be writing exactly as if I were explaining the paintings to myself. There is no use in trying to be objective; there is no reason to sound disinterested. Aren't you similar enough to me to understand—to understand as much as you can regardless of how I present my ideas? If I write with capitals. if i don't. well? look: no grammar no punctuation how much dis-interest and forced object-ivity is needed to commune-icate why so many rules rules rules rules I want to lose all the [[[rules]]].... And yet, I do not do this. If Doug Hanks asks me for information, I give concrete images as a description and a bland, over-used title. Do I pretend to know how the human mind works? Do the rules pretend to know how the human mind works, every single human mind? I should have sent Doug Hanks Stacie's portrait poem. But he wouldn't have printed that either.

I want *Hope* to stimulate a wistful, overpoweringly positive response in the viewer. It should be a painting to which people long to return. I imagine that the memory of the painting would be less powerful than its physical presence. It is best seen alone in a dark room, hanging high on the wall with a strong spotlight on the central figure.

[ONE OF] FIVE PORTRAIT POEMS<sup>3</sup>

stacie

spinning restlessness and screams  
white blur of wings  
you throw purple on everything  
and blood  
and terror  
come out of the night sky

rest feathers on my heaviness  
let me feed myself on voice, skin and smell  
like rain falling to the sea

the old dream fooled me  
the stories of you  
I wanted to rescue you  
to marry you  
to protect you from everything but me  
now I see through it

you must be free from architecture  
to blur and soar, to clean your blood  
like water returning to the sky  
while I lie asleep in moonlight

END NOTES

This article is composed of excerpts from Cortney Clulow, "Six Voices and None: Literary Translations of Six Portrait Paintings" (B.A. thesis, Washington College, 1998). The thesis was presented to the humanities program.—ED.

1. For recent views on the changing function and subject matter of modern portraiture, see Joanna Woodall, ed., *Portraiture: Facing the Subject* (Manchester, England: St. Martin's Press, 1997).
2. This is an excerpt from the section of Clulow's thesis entitled, "The Artist's Readings of Six Portrait Paintings" (p. 7).—ED.
3. This is an excerpt from the section of Clulow's thesis entitled, "Five Portrait Poems" (p. 29). The editor does not include an excerpt from the final section of the thesis, entitled, "Five Questions and Responses" (p. 35).—ED.

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Woodall, Joanna, ed. *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*. Manchester, England: St. Martin's Press, 1997.

# An Indígena In Zumbahua



*Paige Patterson*

You're embarrassed in the doorway,  
half in shadow with loose teeth  
growing like bent eucalyptus  
from your bottom lip,

with botched cheeks like your father's  
tilled patches of crops alternating  
between infertile dunes and heaving  
tufts of pole-like grass.

The muscles on your shoulders careening  
to your collar bone, have striations that etch  
poverty: A boy who has never  
seen in his driveway a woman over four feet tall.

Your dune-grass roof repels rain,  
but you have no electricity and your floor  
is dirt. There are two holes for windows  
and while your eyes grope at me through one,

I ask to take a photo of your mother  
and two sisters for the prize of a jar  
of peanut butter. With shuffling steps  
they take leave from the dark hut

while your father, in the sun, pleads for me to buy  
another Tigua painting, or the poncho off his back.

# Portrait of a City Block



*Paige Patterson*

*avenida Jose Maria y avenida el Inca*

Out of a blue door bursts,  
with one shoe and a paint brush,  
a happy man ready  
to water color Jesus again.

In the median a business  
man pisses on a tree,  
holds his briefcase behind  
his legs with the other hand.

A boy pleads to wash  
a Range Rover's windows  
when the light turns  
red, and the cellular phone

rings in the pocket of the business  
man—he has no hand to answer.  
Though the tectonic plates are revving  
to shift the street's cobblestones,

though the sky is halved  
by teeming volcanoes,  
though the guard at the bank rests  
his finger on the Uzi's trigger—there are woven

blossoms on the lapels of an indígena:  
she is coaxing a retarded man composing traffic  
with a whistle out of the intersection—  
because there are no asylums

in the city, because Panamá forgot  
who made the hat.

# Death in the Plaza



*Paige Patterson*

*Plaza de Toros, Quito, October 27th, 1997*

## I.

Eight bulls are trucked from the páramo  
and at dawn the matadors' men, like geologists  
deciphering which of the Andean volcanoes will erupt,  
question the slopes of their napes, the alertness of their black eyes,  
the sharpness, length, and breadth of their bayonets,  
and if his matador could slither into the cradle  
made by the space between them upon disaster.

## II.

Like the soot of a trumpet you tumble  
into the ring, landing silent as ash  
and curious. Your head aswivel is stilled  
by a man wearing the peel of the sun. The valve from which you fell  
is shut. He is shrilling with bird pitch  
and jerking the carnivorous lava within you  
out with his flagging cape of gold and blood.  
Your two white scythes, blades of sharp moon,  
wane in the folds of his flighty sinews.

If given ten more paseos you'd learn  
the sinews are pinned to the air,  
but your hot muzzle is drawn from the whirling folds  
by a banderillero who, with clown skip, leaves candied  
maypoles buzzing in your nape and carcajadas  
clicking in your ears, and before you can think of tossing him,  
he is an acrobat melting into the barrera.

## III.

Like some nude creature in a state of aboriginal  
bliss the matador corks the black crest of your nape, you kneel  
your bulk like a volcano erupting but inward,  
because there is a crowd in the village picking manzanilla  
and you don't want to crush them.  
A thin flow of red from one nostril escapes and the journalists  
scribble *poor death. He won't have an ear.* The president  
and his wife in box seats wait  
to eat your testicles as your velvet carnage is lugged  
by a draft horse dressed in chains that chip at the afternoon.

# The Banana Queen of Esmeraldas



*Paige Patterson*

*to a woman in a pushcart*

Once, the sea let your honied body drip  
to land from a sunk slave ship  
and you were named queen of the banana fields.

You gave the people scythes and baskets, pushed  
them through ages of monsoon with your propolis fingers  
and today you are honored in the buzzing street

of pocket thieves and dirty fish vendors,  
a thin dark boy manning the pushcart  
in which you sit gazing at the sea,

a filthy turban holding your hair high,  
the day's bananas cooling  
in tall puddles aside your hips.

*Note: Esmeraldas is a town on the coast of Ecuador with a predominantly (95 percent) black population. A common myth says the town's inhabitants are descendants of the survivors of a slave ship that sunk off the coast.*





Paige Patterson, *Two Sisters in Zumbahua*, b&w photograph



Cortney Clulow, *Torment*, oil on canvas, 47 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 60"



Cortney Clulow, *Flow*, oil on canvas, 47 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 60"

Cortney Clulow,  
*Recluse*,  
oil on canvas,  
82½" x 25"

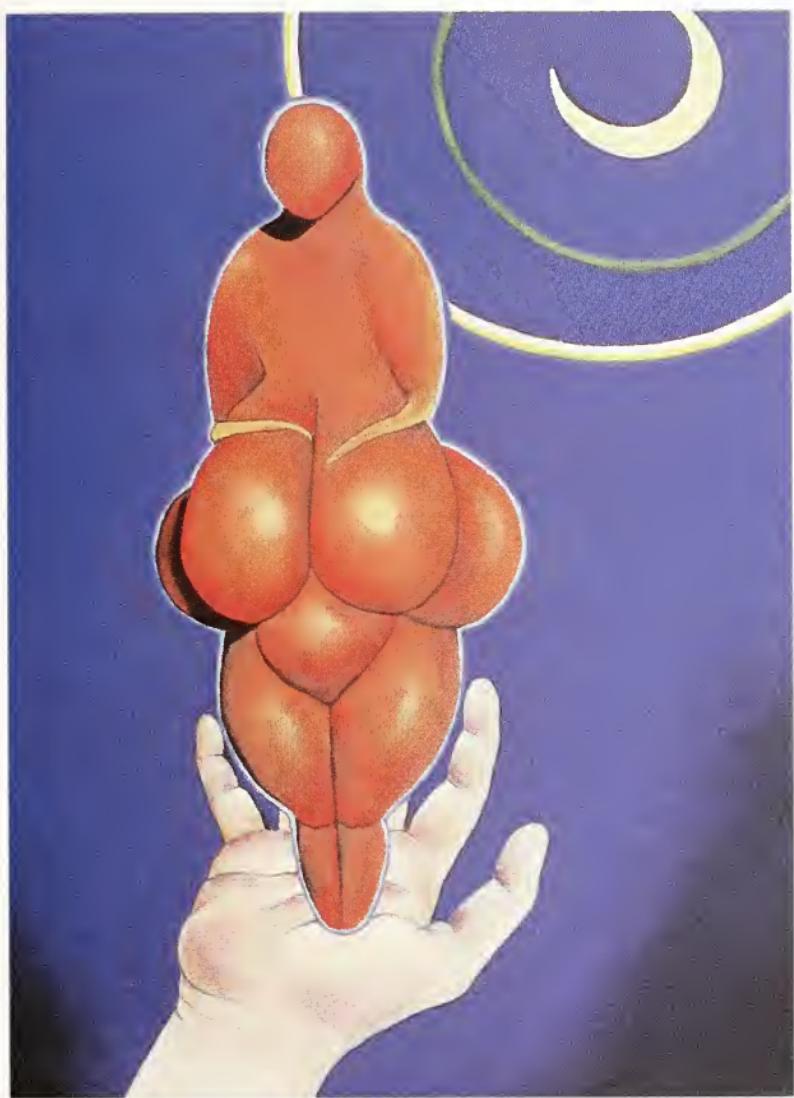




Cortney Clulow, *Despair*, oil on canvas, 36" x 36"



Megan Wolff, *Virgin*, pastel on paper, 18" x 22"



Megan Wolff, *Crone*, pastel on paper, 18" x 22"



Megan Wolff, *Mother*, pastel on paper, 18" x 22"

# *El Excremento Del Diablo:* The Effect of Texaco's Oil Concessions on Ecuador



*Karen Sieger*

ECUADOR IS A COUNTRY that has long been at the mercy of the petroleum industry, and one petroleum giant that has had a lasting impact on Ecuador has been Texaco. Texaco's operations in Ecuador created short-term benefits for the country; however, following the oil boom of the 1970s, Ecuador has been faced with the negative byproducts of the petroleum industry. This paper intends to prove Texaco's contribution to Ecuador's environmental and social problems through an examination of the country's environmental and political background, followed by an analysis of Texaco's operations in the country, and concluding with problems Ecuador currently faces as a result of Texaco's operations. This paper, then, provides a case study showing how foreign investment can affect the environment in poor countries.

For many Latin American countries, oil is known as *el excremento del diablo* or "the devil's excrement." While market economists have defended the oil industry in terms of supply and demand, and cost and price, they have proven to be poor prophets, especially in the case of Ecuador. For the past twenty years, oil companies in the Ecuadorian Amazon have been extracting black gold, while threatening a unique world brimming with life.

Rainforests make up roughly 7 percent of the Earth's land surface and are home to somewhere between two and four million of the Earth's five to ten million species.<sup>1</sup> Of this 7 percent, the single richest region of tropical forest is the Amazon, with thirty thousand plants. When both plants and animals are taken into account, the Amazon support around one million species, while southern and Southeast Asia support roughly three-quarters of a million, and Africa one-third of a million.<sup>2</sup> The world depends on biodiversity and the Latin American rainforest epitomizes biodiversity, with up to 300 species of trees per hectare.<sup>3</sup>

The Amazon consists of an area of approximately 7.8 million square kilometers, sprawling across eight South American countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela.<sup>4</sup> Of the countries incorporating the Amazon, Ecuador is by far the most fascinating with regard to its size and biodiversity. Though only 106,860 square miles, approximately the size of Colorado, Ecuador not only straddles the equator but a whole range of environments—from the snowy peak of Cotopaxi in the Andes, to the rich rainforests of the Amazon basin, to the famous Galapagos archipelago.<sup>5</sup> The eastern region of the Ecuadorian Amazon, or Oriente, however, is Ecuador's frontier territory.

Ecuador is a biologically rich nation with at least fifteen to twenty thousand plant species despite its small size. In addition, much of its flora and fauna are found nowhere else on Earth, and the country is believed to have the highest concentration of species per unit area in South America.<sup>6</sup> Ecuador's biodiversity can be compared with Europe's thirteen thousand plants, but Europe is thirty-one times larger in area than Ecuador.<sup>7</sup> This high level of endemic species in such a small area means that many species may have only a few members and are therefore extremely susceptible to extinction when subjected to disturbances such as oil development. Today, Ecuador has the highest rate of defor-

estation in South America, losing 45,000 hectares or 2.3 percent of its forests annually.<sup>8</sup>

In the coastal region of Ecuador, before the turn of the century, oil was discovered by several foreign companies whose search was based on the discovery of oil along the coast of Peru. Until the 1960s, Ecuadorian oil production amounts were small and came entirely from the coastal areas. Roughly forty thousand of the seventy-three thousand barrels of oil produced in 1917 in Ecuador were from hand-dug pits and shallow wells, mainly in response to demand for oil during World War I.<sup>9</sup> By the end of the 1920s, only about seven oil fields had been discovered, and Ecuador was South America's smallest oil producer.<sup>10</sup>

A couple of decades later, the search for oil shifted to the Oriente. In 1937, Shell Oil was granted an oil concession spanning the entire region; however, they deserted the region in the 1950s when their exploratory work and drilling did not yield any commercial funds. It was not until Texaco renewed the search for oil in the Oriente in the mid-1960s that a rich deposit of oil was discovered in the area of Lago, Agrio, and Nuevo Loja.<sup>11</sup>

Texaco's discovery initiated an oil rush and a number of foreign firms, such as Chevron, Amoco, and Grace, hurried to obtain concessions and began to sink exploratory wells. Once Ecuador realized the potential of the oil finds, the country took immediate steps to shape a national policy to encourage oil exploration and extraction.

Since the boom of the 1970s was impossible to sustain, about 35 percent of the population live in poverty today, and another 17 percent are vulnerable to poverty.<sup>12</sup> In addition, 1.5 million Ecuadorians live in extreme poverty and poverty levels are higher in rural areas, where two out of three poor people live.<sup>13</sup> Oil exploration, nevertheless, is still a strategic and critically important economic activity in Ecuador that generates approximately 40 percent of the country's total volume of exports. Currently, Ecuadorian officials regard the rich

deposits of heavy grade crude oil 10,000 feet beneath the Oriente as the country's best hope of keeping pace with its twelve billion dollar foreign debt obligation.<sup>14</sup> Because of this dependency, the Ecuadorian government has been more or less at the mercy of the oil giants. Consequently, oil subservience has caused serious damage to Ecuador's natural environment.

Texaco spearheaded the multinational invasion of the Oriente, extracting oil from the two northeastern provinces of Sucumbios and Napo from 1972 to 1992. Texaco is America's third largest oil company, with 1996 revenues of \$46 billion.<sup>15</sup> The company, whose international holdings include refineries, petrochemical plants, and an international trading and transportation network, drills for oil in twenty-four countries. The company also owns gasoline stations and convenience stores around the world, including more than fourteen thousand in the United States alone.<sup>16</sup>

In 1964, the Ecuadorian government invited a Texaco subsidiary, Texaco Petroleum Company (Texpet), to explore for and develop oil and gas reserves in Ecuador's vast Amazon region. Texpet was granted a 1.2 million-acre concession in the 32 million-acre Oriente area. In granting these temporary property rights, the Ecuadorian government encouraged Texaco to exploit and overuse the concession for all of its worth, since the company would not be made to bear all the costs of any environmental damage to the area. Therefore, there was decreased incentive for Texaco to take precautions and prevent environmental damage from occurring.

During Texaco's twenty-six-year tenure of the land, the company was given the right to do what it pleased with its concession within specifications. Today, Texaco upholds that it did not cause any lasting or significant impact during its former operations in the Oriente. This claim is allegedly defended by two independent and credible environmental audits that state Texpet acted responsibly in the Ecuadorian rainforest. Texaco does admit that some spills did occur, the majority

of which, it claims, were not caused by operational shortcomings and were the result of natural disasters affecting the Trans-Ecuadorian pipeline, such as landslides and the devastating earthquake of 1987. The company also maintains it responded to the spills. Janet Stoner, president of Texpet, remarks, "As a company, we can look at our record in Ecuador with great pride. We conducted a successful business operation, while also protecting a fragile environment and providing major benefits to the people."<sup>17</sup>

Texpet also states that during its twenty-six-year tenure, its operations provided significant benefits not only to the Ecuadorian economy, but also to the people. The Ecuadorian government received roughly 98 percent of the consortium's total proceeds, which represented more than 50 percent of the country's gross national product during that period.<sup>18</sup> Texaco claims the revenues incurred by Ecuador provided improvements in education, public health and infrastructure. Life expectancy, during this time, rose for men from 51 years to 53, while for women it increased from 63 to 67 years.<sup>19</sup> Infant mortality also decreased from 87 deaths per 1,000 births in 1967 to 44 in 1989.<sup>20</sup> These changes, according to Texaco, not only occurred in the Napo and Pastaza provinces where Texpet operated, but also nationally.

Despite Texaco's assurances that its operations in Ecuador were conducted with prudence, allegations over the past few years from indigenous populations and environmentalists suggest the opposite to be true. Since 1967, American oil development in the Oriente has proceeded virtually without regulation due to ill-defined property rights and Ecuadorian dependency on oil. Unfortunately for Ecuador, the task of managing the resource for the present and future benefit of the country is taxing. Ecuador produces more oil than it needs for domestic consumption, and thus, it is one of the country's leading exports. Therefore, any new drilling for oil is not intended to meet local demand but is intended for export overseas, mostly to Japan and the United States.

As mentioned earlier, dependence on oil revenues has hindered Ecuador's enforcement of environmental legislation, with damaging consequences for the indigenous tribes of the Amazon region and for the environment in the Oriente. Every week roughly 4.5 million gallons of drilling byproducts and untreated toxic pollutants are dumped into a watershed extending over 50,000 square miles of rainforest. This environmental damage is a negative externality that has been imposed on Ecuador by oil companies. In the Oriente, these externalities have had widespread effects which include increased health and productivity costs. In an attempt to decrease the country's dependence on oil revenues, the Ecuadorian government has been trying to promote ecotourism as an additional source of revenue for the country, but as pollution affects the environment and indigenous peoples, the prospect of ecotourism has also diminished. Meanwhile, skin diseases, stomach ailments, respiratory diseases, headaches, malnutrition, and cancer have surfaced in indigenous communities, not only in areas where Texpet operated but also in other areas. Crop yields are extremely low due to soil and air contamination; there has been a loss of game animals; oil workers have reportedly sexually assaulted adolescent girls; and tribal lands have been invaded.

Oil extraction in Ecuador has not only caused health problems for indigenous peoples but also massive colonization and destruction of formerly inaccessible rainforest regions, contamination of rivers and streams, and the invasion of lands inhabited by indigenous groups. The Oriente is home to nine indigenous groups: the Quichua, Shuar, Achuar, Cofan, Siona, Secoya, Shiwiar, Zaparo and Huaoran; some of these groups have as few as 300 people remaining. The oil companies have created an infrastructure in the Oriente that includes over 400 drill sites, hundreds of miles of roads and pipelines, and a primary pipeline that stretches 280 miles across the Andes.<sup>21</sup> In recent years, mainly due to oil development, there has been an intensified

influx of outsiders into the region. For the Oriente's indigenous people who have traditionally depended on the forest for their livelihood and had limited contact with the outside world, this collision of worlds has brought largely negative results. Many groups are experiencing rapid cultural change and an accelerated degradation of their environment, pushing them, in some cases, to the brink of extinction.

One group threatened by encroaching oil exploration is the Huaorani. Huaorani ancestral lands span roughly 2 million hectares. Under Ecuadorian law, no land titles are truly secure since all subsurface minerals are claimed as government property. Consequently, indigenous peoples have been forced to abandon their lands and their way of life. Within Huaorani territory, the Ecuadorian government has granted a number of new concessions to foreign oil companies. Oil production activities within these new concessions seriously threaten the cultural as well as the physical survival of the Huaorani. Huaorani lands that were used by Texpet for oil production activities have been so degraded by pollution, colonization, and deforestation that the Huaorani can no longer live there. Therefore, a system of clearly defined property rights needs to be created in Ecuador to protect the lands of indigenous peoples, to prevent overuse, and to establish the most efficient use of the land.

The town of Coca, located at the junction of the Rio Coca and Rio Napo (Ecuador's major tributary into the Amazon) is another unfortunate example of colliding worlds. Coca was once a moderately sized town whose pioneer residents built hospitals, schools, and churches, and prospered; that is until 1969. In 1969, oil companies found banks of bubbling ooze underground. With an eye for the black gold, oil tycoons decided "not to sip but to chug this Texas tea" and transformed Coca into a "gritty, dirty, riverside pit."<sup>22</sup> Today, Coca is a sprawling oil town filled with shacks and prostitutes, covered in dust and filth with nothing commendable about it. According to one guide-

book, "There's not much to do apart from drink beer and go to bed."<sup>23</sup> Coca may not be attractive, but it is the "haunt of oil workers and tourists looking for expeditions further into the jungle."<sup>24</sup>

Recently, indigenous groups have been organizing and fighting back against the oil companies, especially Texaco. In 1980, COFENIAE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon) was created. COFENIAE is in charge of organizing the different cultural groups, defending their land rights, and creating agricultural, educational, and health programs suited to meet the needs of the natives. The once passive indigenous tribes are now taking to the picket line and protesting for their rights. It is hoped that this will ultimately result in the extraction of natural resources in a responsible manner with the minimum possible impact on people and the environment.

In 1993, a coalition of 120 Oriente communities numbering some 30,000 filed a \$1.5 billion class-action lawsuit in New York, seeking compensation for the environmental atrocities committed by Texaco.<sup>25</sup> The group claimed that Texaco's oil operations were responsible for extensive damage to the Oriente and, with the possible exception of gold mining in Brazil, it is alleged to be the worst case of toxic contamination in the entire Amazon. Though the Ecuadorian government estimated the cleanup cost at \$1.5 billion, Texaco only offered \$12 million.<sup>26</sup> The suit was brought to New York because Texaco is an American company and because the Indians would not receive a fair hearing in Ecuador. They accused Texaco of careless disregard and cutting costs to increase profits. However, Texaco claimed that its exploration, carried out from 1972 until 1990, did not violate any laws, as Ecuador lacked specific environmental legislation. The company increased its cleanup estimate, offering to contribute to a \$13.5 million Oriente cleanup fund.

Today, the Oriente is home to a thriving and environmentally destructive oil industry. Over the course of the past two decades, foreign oil companies, led by Texaco and Petroecuador, have extracted

1.5 billion barrels of Amazon crude from the Oriente. At present rates the Oriente will be pumped out within 20 years. The current strategy of oil development pursued by the oil giants in Ecuador is both economically and environmentally unsustainable. If current operational practices are not overhauled, the Oriente may be left so ravaged that other economic alternatives for this rich region, such as ecotourism, sustainable forestry, and production of medicinal plants, will be unfeasible. The future of Ecuador, however, still seems dependent on the petroleum industry. This is best summed up by a 1977 report that still applies to Ecuador today:

A few weeks without the nourishment of oil revenues can turn Ecuador's economy from prosperity ... or even topple the national government. Ecuador's dependence upon foreign investment, technology and expertise, and above all, upon foreign export markets, has been accentuated by the oil bonanza, making the country even more vulnerable to the pressures of foreign interest groups.<sup>27</sup>

This trend of oil dependency cannot continue. Ecuador must find a way to decrease its reliance on oil revenues. This cannot happen unless the international community relieves pressure on the Ecuadorian government to increase petroleum production and develop new areas in order to reduce its massive debt burden. The country must be allowed to diversify its national economy, improve the standard of living of all Ecuadorians, and to undertake a major environmental cleanup in oil-producing areas.

While it is easy to condemn the oil companies for the destruction of the Amazon, conservation and preservation have only recently become a factor in society. When Texaco and other oil companies started their exploration and drilling operations in Ecuador, the main priority was not environmental protection but extraction of oil as quickly and inexpensively as possible. The intention of the oil companies was

not to disrupt indigenous peoples or pollute the air, land, and water, but to pump oil and make money. However, now that we know the extent of the damage that occurred in the past, we can harness that awareness and knowledge to prevent such a situation from occurring again.

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# The Habits of Reading Communities in Early Modern England



*Ed Geisweidt*

**S**TOP. BEFORE YOU CONTINUE the consumption of this text, perhaps it would be appropriate to ask yourself what you are doing. Most likely you are reading, though the uses of this article admittedly extend beyond its primary utility. The next thing to consider is how you are reading. You could say that you are following the text line by line, from left to right, translating the visual arrangement of familiar symbols into a coherent discourse of thought suitable to the author's intentions for shaping that discourse. If that is the limit to which you are participating in the action of reading, you are digesting these words passively, possibly for the production of pleasure, in a process commonly called leisure reading. If, however, you are appropriating this text for its usefulness in your own future action, if you are drawing parallels between this text and others you have read in the past, if you have already filled the one-inch margins on either side with your own comments, interpretations, insights, and criticisms, or, better yet, if you are filling your own book with these annotations, if you have considered your present physical environs, as well as current social, political, and cultural climate and the relation of this text and your reading of it to all these factors, then you are reading actively, a process in which all college and university professors would

like to see their students participate. Obviously, this critical analysis of the act of reading is applicable not just to this text, but to all written and printed material, and it can be applied not only to reading in our contemporary moment but also to readers throughout history.

It is my intent that this article focus on the nature of reading in the historical period of early modern England. I will examine the habits of reading in academic circles, where scholars utilized their university training to make significant contributions to the civic sphere. My research derives from my experiences as an intern at the Folger Institute in Washington, D.C. There, I provided administrative support for the conduct of scholarly seminars, one of which was the NEH Summer Institute, "The Habits of Reading in Early Modern England," directed by Professor Steven Zwicker of Washington University, St. Louis. Working with the institute granted me the rarest of undergraduate experiences, including attending discussions led by some of the foremost scholars of early modern England.

#### I. HABITS OF READING COMMUNITIES

Rudolf Hirsh writes, "Whether printers published books simply to make money, or without forethought of material gain, they surely intended to have them read."<sup>1</sup> Readers played an important part in print culture, beyond being the abstract objects of a publisher's consideration in the selection of texts for print. By scanning the words on the page, the reader brought a kind of completion to the work put into the book by the printers, publishers, booksellers, authors, binders, translators, editors, and anyone else who may have contributed to the text and the final copy.

Just as the quality of a finished book depended on the skill and effort of the printer, the substantial efficacy elicited from the book varied according to the operations of the reader. The texts reproduced

in mass quantities on the press were somewhat uniform, but once the text was in the hands of readers in book form, there was no way of formally structuring the reception given it by each individual reader. Roger Chartier notes the importance of recognizing the diversity in the methods of reading when studying reading habits: "Far from being a phenomenology that wipes out all concrete modalities of the act of reading and characterizes that act by its effects, which are postulated to be universal . . . a history of reading must identify the specific mechanisms that distinguish the various communities of readers and traditions of reading."<sup>2</sup> Going back centuries to discern the mechanisms of what is today accepted to be an individualistic activity can be a difficult process. Anthony Grafton describes studying past reading as an "act of intellectual conjuring."<sup>3</sup> Individuals rarely leave tangible residue from their moments of reading, but physical and conjectural evidence of individual readings is not completely nonexistent. It is rather more plausible, however, to study the habits of reading at the community level. Chartier describes the various uses of print materials to readership communities as follows:

Personalized reading in private by no means exhausted the possible uses of print objects. Their festive, ritual, cultic, civic, and pedagogic uses were by definition collective and postulated decipherment in common, those who knew how to read leading those who did not.<sup>4</sup>

As this list shows, communities of readers can be delineated according to their thematic, specialized uses of print. Other distinguishing factors that inform a community of readers include status, place of residence, social habits, and purchasing power.<sup>5</sup> In some cases, membership in a reading community merely required a minimal level of literacy; in other cases, the community demanded a specialized style of reading, in which those with the authority or skill in special mecha-

nisms of reading tried to lead or teach others. I have tried to isolate one general community of readers—the academic community—in order to study one specific type of reading. What I plan to do is distinguish the habits of reading of this community by analyzing how academics used the printed material with which their community was associated.

## II. READING ACTION IN THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

Certain qualifications apply when trying to define the academic, or scholarly, reading community of the early sixteenth century. The use of words such as academic and scholarly to designate this community does not imply that it is limited in membership to schoolboys and schoolmasters, with no foundation outside the classroom. The realm of the academic was not a homogeneous, self-absorbed sphere disassociated from civic life. From this community emerged a caste of professional readers who were employed to engage their skills not for the sake of scholarly learning but for affairs of society and the state. Among the non-academic employers of scholarly readers were “administrative, legal, and military institutions”<sup>6</sup> which utilized scholarly readers in the “interpretation and analysis of texts in the interests of ... policy making, diplomatic negotiations, and military strategy.”<sup>7</sup> In this capacity, the reader acts as an intermediary or a facilitator between the text and those for whom the text holds relevance. The reader distances his personal interests from the text and concentrates only on formulating the practical application of the material he is reading as it applies to himself or to his employer or patron.

An approach to the habits of reading of the academic community is made substantially easier by the fact that readers in this community followed a model outlining a characteristic reading for the entire com-

munity. Not only did this model describe the mechanics to be used during the actual act of reading, it also provided a guide for the reader's appropriate mental reception and thought process while consuming the text. The serious, formalized nature of reading in this community did not allow the freedom that offers pleasure in the way a leisurely reading does. Instead, the model of scholarly reading encouraged readers to exercise their own authority over the text, treating the text more as a tool than a mere source of joy. The academic model inspired adherents to pursue reading, both in the process and the outcome itself, as an active endeavor, as opposed to passive.<sup>8</sup>

The famous Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536) significantly influenced the reading habits of early modern English scholars. His works generally accounted for at least forty percent of a student's collection.<sup>9</sup> Kintgen writes that the model of reading Erasmus provides in his *De Conscribendi Epistolis* is intended to be followed by grammar school students; however, this model served students into their adult lives.<sup>10</sup> In effect, the instructional works of Erasmus serve as expositions on the habits of students and scholarly readers to come. The Erasmian model recommends that readers engage a text in four critical readings, considering first the grammatical aspects of the text, then the rhetorical ones. In his third encounter, the reader looks for particularly striking material worth saving and records it for future use.<sup>11</sup> The fourth reading produces the moral and philosophical implications of the passage.<sup>12</sup> Reading in this fashion elucidates much more than an author's general argument, taking into account such elements that form a text as style, rhetoric, cultural, political, and social context. The emphasis on multiple, functional readings reveals an important aspect of scholarly reading—it was highly analytical.

The importance of reading analytically is also evident in the practice of segmenting a text into smaller passages which constitute autonomous readings. Passages were consistently broken down and the

reader's attention focused on arguments, adages, and maxims,<sup>13</sup> sayings, apothegms, epigrams, and proverbs,<sup>14</sup> among other snippets. These excerpts, and not the text as a unified whole, were the focus of the critical four readings. Schoolboys were trained to see these features in their reading, and the habit continued as they entered the civic sphere.

The habit of reading intertextually is another important aspect of scholarly reading. Whereas religious reading stressed confirmation of meanings through intratextuality, a cross-referencing within the same text, scholarly readers practiced intertextuality, the use of several different books to constitute one reading. According to the Erasmian model, an analytical eye was expected to see a nexus of connections or parallel passages among several different works.<sup>15</sup> With intertextuality, readings were fragmentary not only within a single text, but also within a framework of texts. As was common in the scholarly community, fragments and passages from several different books (rather than one complete book), analyzed in relation to one another, formed a single reading.

Two inventions facilitated the practice of intertextuality in the early modern period. The first, not surprisingly, was the printing press. Eisenstein's work reminds us that the role of the printing press in making available more texts, old and not so old, cannot be taken for granted.<sup>16</sup> In order to develop and to spread a reading habit that required an accumulation of books, there first had to be the necessary means through which to produce enough of them—while monks in *scriptoriums* laboriously produced large quantities of expensive handwritten texts, the printing presses produced larger quantities of cheaper texts faster. Eisenstein continues by arguing that the coming together of texts encouraged the combination of old ideas, leading eventually to the creation of new systems of thought.<sup>17</sup> While this movement

carries much larger implications than are necessary for the study of the habits of one reading community, it does illustrate a discernible outcome of active reading made possible by scholarly protocols.

If intertextuality was an offshoot of one invention, it was apparently the inspiration for another. With the physical places of reading becoming increasingly swamped with so many texts relative to the moment, the book wheel made intertextuality physically more manageable. This “combination of cabinetry and cogwheels,” new in the sixteenth century, rotated vertically and could hold many open books at once.<sup>18</sup> This large device allowed a serious reader easy reference to various chosen texts simply by turning the wheel. The book wheel was emblematic of a certain kind of reader: “It was people who did accumulate volumes who ... provided themselves with the modern machinery for making such reading possible.”<sup>19</sup> The book wheel represents more than just a tool of physical convenience, it belongs to a “cultural moment, in which collation and parallel citation were an essential, constructive part of a particular kind of reading.”<sup>20</sup> The book wheel was thus (for a select group of skilled readers) a functional component in intertextuality and the overall scholarly reading habits, relegating itself an importance beyond the novelty of invention.

Evidence of analytical readings and intertextuality physically presents itself in the margins of scholarly books. A truly academic reading would not be complete without some writing instrument close at hand. According to the Erasmian model, readers should personalize their readings by indicating salient words or passages.<sup>21</sup> The personalization of marginal notes indicates a reader’s immersed engagement of the text, giving an indication of that individual’s reading process. Often academics recorded their reactions to texts in separate books called commonplaces. Commonplace books were divided into particular subject headings so that a reader could hit on each “literary orna-

ment" and put it in its "box," or appropriate category in the commonplace.<sup>22</sup> Commonplace books were thus designed to facilitate comments, insights, and notations to a reading in the practice of Erasmian fragmentation. It is clear that the integral use of marginal annotations and commonplace books to a reading provided a "concrete teleology" for reading.<sup>23</sup> Not only was the physical writing of marginalia an active function, it was also part of a much larger scheme for activity which was the teleological end of a scholarly reading.

A key term that is often used in discussing the teleological end of a scholarly reading is "action." In their article "Studied for Action," Jardine and Grafton assert that "Renaissance readers (and annotators) persistently envisage action as the outcome of reading—not simply reading as active, but reading as trigger for action."<sup>24</sup> In this sense, reading was not an end in itself but was always in preparation for a future performance. It is the emphasis on activity as a result of reading that lends a classroom model of reading relevance in the civic sphere: "Within the confines of the schoolroom, this ... activity was writing, but the broader concept was that reading prepared one to participate in the life of the commonweal."<sup>25</sup> On a personal level, the planned activity to follow a reading could simply be writing a responsive letter.<sup>26</sup> On a much larger scale, a reading could be intended, as Tribble writes, to "draw men to virtuous action within an orderly commonwealth."<sup>27</sup> Here we see the opportunities for which the grammar school trained academicians to step out of the universities and broaden the academic reading community to include the professional readers. In such a capacity, scholarly readers functioned in civic institutions under the auspices of a Renaissance notion of virtue. Under these circumstances, a scholarly reading could not be passive or externally guided; it required a reader's active appropriation of the text in order that the reading effectively prepare the reader for an outcome significant to the common good.

## CONCLUSION

England's emergence as a Commonwealth of Print affected each level of society to some degree. Chartier's words concerning the effect of print culture on the West is easily understood in the case of early modern England:

After Gutenberg, all culture in western societies can be held to be a culture of the printed word, since what movable type and the printing press produced ... penetrated the entire web of social relations, bore thoughts and brought pleasures and lodged in people's deepest self as well as claiming its place in the public scene.<sup>28</sup>

Each level of society received print culture into its communities in a different way. Academics greeted printed texts as new tools of their trade of professional reading. The advent of printing facilitated new mechanisms of reading, as well as inspired new technology, through a plurality of texts. Aided by the book wheel, scholars read intertextually and performed complex analysis on texts in order to utilize printed material as preparatory for political and professional performances. The various concerns of reading, the passivity, authority, and activity that characterized different forms of reading in early modern times, can still be seen in present habits of reading.

## END NOTES

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21. Kintgen, 26.
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23. Kintgen, 43.
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# Hugo Van der Goes as a Radioactive Element



Cortney Clulow

I SEE MARY, DRESSED IN SOMBER BLUE, kneeling before her baby Savior; he lies naked on the bare earth. I am looking at a painting made more than five-hundred years before I was born. Strangely, the faces, the paint, make me feel heady emotion; I become reverent, awed, earnest, excited. My eyes move quickly through the images, consuming details. Unlike other religious paintings, this one frustrates digestion—I am caught inside of the painting. A forceful empathy for the solemn-faced characters overcomes me, and I find myself deep in a strange, enigmatic world.

Hugo van der Goes of Ghent (ca. 1440–1482) painted the *Portinari Altarpiece* (ca. 1473–8), of which I have just written. Because I believe that the personality of the artist transfers, at least in part, to his creation, I have sought to understand the man in an effort to explore his art. There exist certain difficulties in trying to familiarize oneself with someone five-hundred years dead, and after researching him, I do not claim to know Hugo van der Goes, but I do claim to have a richer personal understanding of his paintings. I believe my attraction to van der Goes' works is rooted in personal identification; researching his life has intensified this belief. However, his works have not survived over the centuries just by virtue of their personal, emotional appeal. They also celebrate a technical excellence common to the works of Jan van Eyck (ca. 1390–1441) and Rogier van der Weyden (1399/

1400–1464), the painters who largely established the Netherlandish tradition. There exists an uncommon union of pathos and aesthetics in van der Goes' work. He seizes upon traditional, academic convention and presents it expressively. In this way, Hugo van der Goes is a strange mutant of the fifteenth century; he is making religious paintings as an anachronistic Expressionist.

Erwin Panofsky sets up the following metaphor in his chapter on Hugo van der Goes in his classic work, *Early Netherlandish Painting*: certain people can be likened to stable, metastable, or unstable elements.<sup>2</sup> Uncreative people act like stable elements that give off no energy, stimuli notwithstanding. Artists who create reactively, within an environment, act like metastable elements when externally stimulated. Stimulation leads these elements to give off energy. The third group of people are not reactive; rather, they are radioactive. Panofsky suggests that Hugo van der Goes belongs to this last group because “only unstable substances give off energy in the absence of any exterior stimulus; but in emitting rays they gradually destroy themselves.”<sup>3</sup>

If I believe van der Goes was radioactive, then I assume his works came from some internal source, not from “any exterior stimulus.” Max J. Friedländer supports this assumption in the forward to his fourth volume of *Early Netherlandish Painting*, proclaiming the painter to be a trailblazer from Ghent who “lived and worked cheek by jowl with members of his generation who jogged along in the old rut.”<sup>4</sup> In the chapter, “The Character and Style of Hugo van der Goes,” Friedländer addresses van der Goes’ separateness.<sup>5</sup> As a member of the painter’s guild, van der Goes stood out as the most accomplished master, incurring both other artists’ respect and envy. Friedländer suggests that later, van der Goes worked at an exclusive level as the dean of the painter’s guild, making himself an enemy of society, an intruder in the community. For these reasons, according to Friedländer, van der Goes left society and entered the Roode Klooster (Red Cloister) as a *frater conversus*, or servant of the monastery. And yet, even behind monas-

tery walls, he lived alone, continuing to paint, receiving visitors, and being privileged to dine in the guest chamber. “He was a stranger in Ghent, a stranger in the monastery, a stranger in his age,” writes Friedländer.<sup>6</sup>

If it is true that Hugo van der Goes was a lonely innovator, operating on the periphery of the contemporary art scene, self-reliance was the key to his success. The artist himself was crucial to his creations. Among his works, namely the *Virgin and Child*, *The Holy Women*, *The Descent from the Cross*, *Sir Edward Bonkil with Two Angels*, *The Trinity of the Broken Body*, *The Fall of Man*, *The Lamentation over Christ*, the *Portinari Altarpiece*, the *Monforte Altarpiece*, *The Death of the Virgin*, and *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, common themes of suffering, guilt, and reverence are manifest. In his chapter, “The Works of Hugo van der Goes,” Friedländer remarks on a “child precociously matured through sorrow . . . sad in expression with a lost, unfocused gaze . . . [and] the spiritual depth that rings out movingly from [van der Goes’] faces.”<sup>7</sup> If his creative energies came from an internal source, the nature of his artwork may reflect the nature of the artist. Perhaps the community’s inability to understand the artist forced van der Goes to mature through sorrow. Perhaps sadness and an “unfocused gaze” were the effects of his lonely self-reliance. Perhaps pathos rang out from the artist as he found the only means of communication left to him in the image-making of so many speechless faces.

Tragically, van der Goes’ apparent self-reliance was often in conflict with the content of his art. Self-reliance is necessitated by the artist but religion calls on humankind to be wholly reliant on God. Van der Goes believed himself to be an artist, but as an artist he was damned.

According to Jochen Sander’s catalog of works, van der Goes made a *St. Luke Painting the Virgin*.<sup>8</sup> This subject had long sanctified the act of rendering the divine, of incarnating immortal flesh as paint on canvas. Likewise, the birth of Jesus as the mortal son of Mary is used to defend the “incarnation of religious imagery.” There are dangerous

lines of thought that flow from this example. St. Luke was actually painting the Madonna—the real woman in the flesh. When van der Goes painted the Madonna, he was not painting the real woman. In fact, he rendered a version of the Madonna according to his own tastes, solemn and aloof.

Craig Harbison argues that there was a shift during the fifteenth century as the *devotio moderna* became a significant new mode of thought. People no longer understood images as some universal narrative; rather, they acknowledged the subjective nature of imagery.<sup>9</sup> The images of particular patrons and personal visions were subject to *docta ignorantia* theology, in which “a lay person’s humble and direct piety [surpassed] that of a learned confessor or teacher.”<sup>10</sup> This meant that images themselves were no longer sacred. Art was only a stepping stone for people to use to reach the divine vision that had nothing to do with themselves or the artist, but had everything to do with God. The image was intended to inspire the prototype of the subject in the mind of the viewer; stress was placed on personal devotional imagination—each believer was to use their own faculties to reach a point of pure meditation, personally allowing God to be priest and artist.

The Modern Devotion movement of the fifteenth century was strongly influenced by the writings of Thomas à Kempis, an austere theologian whose “Flemish book” (the *Imitatio Christi*) may have been closely studied by van der Goes.<sup>11</sup> In their chapter entitled, “Hugo van der Goes’ Case History,” Rudolf and Margot Wittkower cite the *Portinari Altarpiece* as evidence of the artist’s support of the *docta ignorantia*.<sup>12</sup> The picture celebrates the awe and simple joy of the peasant shepherds while criticizing the dead spirituality of the royal Magi. The authors claim that à Kempis had a profound affect on van der Goes and that his retreat to the monastery was indicative of his absorption of passages like this one:

Shun conversation with worldly men, for thou art not able to be satisfied with both God and men; with things eternal and things transitory.

The devil is continually tempting thee to seek after high things, to go after honours.

Do not begin to wander after the various desires of the world, when the devil tempts thee. Listening to evil things is hurtful to the soul; the beholding of beauty is temptation.<sup>13</sup>

If van der Goes' devotional piety consisted of image-making, and if his images were worldly because, according to the Modern Devotion, no imagery is divine, then the Ghent artist must have felt much conflict in embracing à Kempis's theology. The passage above would have been especially biting. Van der Goes must have felt harrowed by the devil each time he was given special treatment in recognition for his artistic accomplishment. Inescapably, image-making would lead others and the artist himself into temptation as they beheld the beauty of the images. Following à Kempis, van der Goes must be guilty.<sup>14</sup>

Where did this leave the artist? Van der Goes did not proceed from an image-dependent stage of meditation to arrive at an imageless prototype in his devotions. For the artist, meditation and an imageless prototype preceded physicality: the painting was not a point of departure, it was the goal. He was the image-maker. The images he made were not a means to something higher; rather, they were ends in themselves. He worshipped with paint. Through self-reliance, van der Goes tried to be the artist instead of allowing God to be the artist for him. The very fact that van der Goes uses themes of sorrow and guilt in his imagery would prove to someone of the Modern Devotion that his imagery is not holy; rather, his imagery is personal and reflects his own struggles. Only God's imagery is holy, and it cannot be seen in paint.

Aside from the fact that van der Goes was an image-maker—this alone proves the primacy of imagery in his life—two of his diptychs, *Sir Edward Bonkil with Two Angels* and *The Trinity of the Broken Body*, and *The Fall of Man and The Lamentation over Christ*, testify to the weighty significance of his imagery. On the left side of the Bonkil commission, we see God the father, God the son, and God the holy spirit. Panofsky suggests that van der Goes' work was modeled after a painting of the Trinity by the Flémalle Master.<sup>15</sup> *The Trinity of the Broken Body* deviates significantly from the Flémalle Master's painting because the father and the son rendered by the Ghent Master exhibit the same features. Conversely, the Flémalle Master depicted God the father as an old, white-bearded man. Van der Goes interpreted the dualism of God as both father and son in terms of their visual presence; their image must be one and the same if they are to be understood, at any level, as being one and the same. Certainly the facial expressions of the two men are quite distinct. The son is depicted pathetically, as the embodiment of physical suffering. The father, on the other hand, exhibits the lost, unfocused gaze of metaphysical suffering. Thus, God the father and God the son are one and the same and yet distinct.

The second diptych, the *Fall of Man/Lamentation*, also deals with dualism. On the left side, Van der Goes depicts Adam and Eve in the lavish Garden of Eden. Eve has taken a bite from the fruit in her right hand and is reaching up with her left to pick a second fruit for Adam. Both Adam and Eve have exceptionally unexpressive faces—quite empty, almost puppet-like. The serpent to Eve's left is charged with personality, however. Perversely, she looks on as the careless pair proceed to damn humanity for all time. The right-hand panel depicts the effect of Eve's action: Christ's dead body sits rigidly in the midst of grief-stricken women and apostles at Golgotha, the desolate place of the skull. Curiously, after having seen both pictures side by side many times, I eventually noticed the distinct similarity of Eve and the

Magdalene's features. And like the expressions of God the father and God the son, the expressions of the two women (one and the same?) are very different. While Eve's face is notably empty, with no trace of suffering, the Magdalene's is so full of pathos as to be more distracting than the crucified body of Christ. While Eve's long body is graceful and poised, the Magdalene's shoulders slump, and she sits with her hands clenched, with no indication of ever intending to move again.

Even more interestingly, the Magdalene is staring straight outwards. This is not a common convention of van der Goes' works. In fact, the infrequency of its occurrence led me to search for other instances. I found that in *The Death of the Virgin*, the apostle closest to us (John?), seated at the foot of the Virgin's deathbed, is depicted with almost the exact same demeanor as the Magdalene, and he too stares straight out at the viewer. His head is cocked at the same angle and his position gives off the same listless feeling as the Magdalene's. The apostle's face suggests that he knows too much; it shows a hopeless exhaustion. Van der Goes looked deeply into these faces as he painted; he made their eyes stare straight into his own. Is it possible that these two characters somehow represent the artist's personal sense of loss and exhaustion? It seems to me that van der Goes expressed himself in a very intimate way through his images. Perhaps he was working out his own guilt as a result of the weight of his sins in accordance with the teachings of à Kempis's *Imitatio Christi*. In both diptychs, I believe, the meditation and execution of van der Goes' work testifies to his intense devotional piety.

Another biblical source often given as evidence of God's approval of image-making, namely Mary's conception and delivery of Christ as God incarnate, also leads to a very disturbing line of thought. God's incarnation depended upon the energies of the Virgin Mary. In a deeply mysterious way, God the son formed inside Mary's body, fed off her energies, was born, intimately cared for, and nurtured until his maturity. Without Mary, Christ would never have lived to adulthood.

Marian legend holds that the Virgin's bond to Christ is so powerful (he was, in effect, flesh of her flesh) that she is our Co-Redeemer.<sup>16</sup> All the sufferings felt by the flesh of Christ were in turn felt by Mary, and she, like Christ, has been crowned in heaven. What follows if the artist creates images of Christ? Did van der Goes foster the full trinity in his artistic womb when he conceived *The Trinity of the Broken Body*? If he didn't have a model nearby and used his own hands as a quick reference for Christ's hands, or posed in a mirror to be certain that the angle of the shoulders was rendered accurately, is Christ then flesh of the artist's flesh?

Having studied van der Goes' paintings, I believe he did use his own hands as models. The hands in his paintings are extremely life-like and distinctive. They also seem very similar. Perhaps all artists use a generic hand type, but I suspect the generic hand type is their own, or a derivative of their type. It is interesting to think about how significant hands are to an artist—any kind of artist. Art is about communication, and hands, I would argue, are easily the most felicitous members of our bodies for such activity. If hands are, in fact, so very expressive, and van der Goes used his own hands (or some generic type that he derived from them) as models for the Virgin's hands, or Christ's, or God's, or any other sacred person's, isn't he, in a way, incarnating himself? I wonder if Thomas à Kempis could have found anything more blasphemous and prideful than a self-portrait of the artist as a divine personage.<sup>17</sup>

As a radioactive element, Hugo van der Goes lived and worked separately from the main body of humanity. His self-reliance, as manifested in the primacy of image-making in his devotional piety and in the personal expression inherent in his imagery, set him at odds with contemporary theology. The image and the individual were to be sublimated through meditation and divine illumination. But van der Goes could not sublimate those two things that were his whole existence. Here is where the second half of Panofsky's metaphor comes into sharp

focus: "in emitting rays [unstable substances] gradually destroy themselves."<sup>18</sup> For centuries, melancholia has been the name of Hugo van der Goes' gradual destruction.

Gaspar Ofhuy's report and evaluation of Hugo van der Goes' last years of life serve as the most telling primary source for the artist's melancholia. Ofhuy did not write his three-page entry until ca. 1510. By then, he was the *infirmarius* of the Roode Klooster, reporting on the illness and death of van der Goes some twenty-eight years earlier.<sup>19</sup> No source has been quoted by more van der Goes' scholars than this one. Here is a basic synopsis: Ofhuy and van der Goes were novices together. According to Ofhuy, the artist was far less humble and was privileged far more than the other novices. After five or six years in the monastery, van der Goes made a journey with some other brothers to Cologne. On the return trip, he "was seized by a strange illness of the mind; he uttered unceasing laments about being doomed and sentenced to eternal damnation. He even wanted to lay murderous hands on himself and had to be prevented by force from doing so ... he continued to rave and to pronounce himself a child of perdition."<sup>20</sup> Apparently, this was no brief episode. Ofhuy tells us that van der Goes did recover before his death in 1482 (one or two years after his breakdown) but he gives no hint as to whether the artist remained dysfunctional for a number of days or for more than a year. Regardless, van der Goes never completely recovered. Ofhuy writes, "This humiliating disease ... made him very contrite ... as soon as he had recovered he became most humble; on his own free will he refused to eat in our refectory and took his lowly meals with the lay brothers."<sup>21</sup>

Among scholars there is a debate as to whether melancholia was a disease brought on by the nature of the artist's occupation or by the nature of the man. In his article, "Painters 'Born Under Saturn': The Physiological Explanation," John F. Moffitt maintains that the presence of lead and other toxic minerals in paint "penetrates to the seat of the animal spirits, enters by the breathing passages the abode of the

blood, disturbs the economy of the natural functions, and excites the disorders ... this and no other explains cachectic condition and melancholy fits.”<sup>22</sup> In this case, then, melancholy is strictly a physical affliction. Robert Burton cites melancholy as a physical disease in the *Anatomy of Melancholy*: “The predominance of black bile, melancholia ... causes a depressed state of mind and dangerously weakens one’s overall health.”<sup>23</sup> Melancholy is also associated with the planetary influence of Saturn. This influence is said to be the basis for much accomplishment in the humanities: “Melancholy humor in excess could lead to the diseased state of depression and despondency, in moderate predominance it excited the superiority of genius.”<sup>24</sup>

However, the agreement of the majority of scholars is that van der Goes’ affliction was the result of both physical and non-physical causes. Melancholia resulted from the peculiarities of the man’s occupation partnered with his unique mentality. In the *Portinari Altarpiece*, there is the faintest image of a golden demon just above the horns of the ox. This image is so subtle and so anomalous that only modern historians have commented on its presence. Robert M. Walker suggests that the demon is Lucifer, leonine, with gryphon claws, placed on the scene as a reminder that Christ’s birth confused but did not banish the demons that plague man.<sup>25</sup> This seems to be van der Goes’ personal demon. Its leonine qualities suggest the deadly sins of pride and envy, (the two sins for which the archangel was cast out of heaven). I imagine his brothers at the Roode Cloister, as well as the writings of à Kempis, reminded van der Goes daily of his failings in humility, allowing the dim image of Lucifer to haunt him unmercifully.

As a citizen of Ghent, van der Goes lived in the shadow of van Eyck’s *Ghent Altarpiece*. In 1485, Hieronymus Münzer wrote of his travels in Ghent. When remarking on the altarpiece he noted that “another great painter came to this work, wanted to emulate it, and became melancholic and foolish.”<sup>26</sup> Perhaps the sins of envy and pride

truly weighed heavily on van der Goes. With regard to this speculation, it is interesting that van der Goes never signed or dated his works. In my mind, this suggests the artist's self-deprecatory humility. Perhaps van der Goes wasn't following a little rule book of "How to be Humble," but it seems that his entrance into the cloister, the absence of his name or any self-portraiture in his art, and the self-hatred expressed during his breakdown, offer compelling evidence that pridefulness was merely an acute paranoia of a very self-conscious image-maker. Unfortunately, melancholia was also associated with the vices of despair and avarice, the latter being one of the seven deadly sins.<sup>27</sup> Three of the seven damnable sins may have been working at the soul of the Ghent painter, eating away at his sanity until he finally broke down.

Van der Goes' paintings reveal a preoccupation with melancholia. The articles by R. Koch, M. B. McNamee, and the work done by Panofsky illustrate the complex symbolism present in van der Goes' imagery.<sup>28</sup> This gives evidence of the artist's scholarly deliberation. What is most interesting is that much of the symbolism employed by van der Goes in the *Portinari Altarpiece* is specific to his own solemn nature. Koch takes notice that the Ghent artist eschews the celebrant white Easter lily and the lustrous rose. Instead, van der Goes paints irises, columbine, and violets for the Virgin. Unlike the lily and the rose, these three blooms reference Mary's grief: the leaf of the iris for the spear that cut Christ's side, the columbine for her melancholy, and seven dark violet petals for humility and each of her sorrows.<sup>29</sup> With intense botanical accuracy, van der Goes paints various herbs into his landscapes. Many of these plants were prescribed in such popular books as the *Physica and Hortus Sanitatis* by Hildegard of Bingen for the treatment of sadness, despondency and heartache.<sup>30</sup> The color of Mary's deep blue robe testifies to her knowledge of the suffering to come and indicates her perseverance.<sup>31</sup> The obsessive nature of van der Goes'

interest in the symptoms of melancholia was shared by the seventeenth-century cleric and writer, Robert Burton. He allegedly suffered from melancholia and managed to generate a three-volume, twelve-hundred page *Anatomy of Melancholy*, which in turn disseminated rapidly among the population.<sup>32</sup> He researched every documented case, every possible symptom, cause and cure. Melancholy is a disease for the scholar, the over-thinker.

Hugo van der Goes' works exhibit a sort of stylistic evolution. Because they are undated, there is much debate about the sequencing of his works. It is generally agreed that the *Portinari Altarpiece* marked a stylistic turning point as the last piece completed outside of the monastery.<sup>33</sup> Those works painted before the *Portinari Altarpiece* are considered spatially rational, tranquil in composition, and harmonious in color. Those works completed afterwards tend to exploit "space and color for emotional potentiality rather than rational effect."<sup>34</sup> Panofsky comments on the two decidedly later works, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, and *The Death of the Virgin* as follows:

[The] intensity of simple-hearted devotion, prophetic ecstasy, and muted sorrow have reached a point at which emotion blots out consciousness and threatens to break down the barrier that protects reason from both the subhuman and the superhuman.<sup>35</sup>

Here we see a direct parallel between the artist and his art. Van der Goes abandons spatial realism, color harmony, symbolism and perspective, in favor of subjective, personal vision. Similarly, in his life, he has abandoned society and turned to the more introspective, meditative life of the religious man.

Hugo van der Goes was an anachronistic figure of the fifteenth century. He drew upon his own life's energy to create images charged with a new pathos. His images are not didactic; they don't explain

themselves. They aren't populated by empty-eyed stock characters performing strict, contextual actions. They are like movie stills, frozen moments in a complex, vivid world. I feel the rays that Panofsky imagines van der Goes emitting; I feel them hit into me as I engage his paintings. If he was troubled and melancholic, Hugo van der Goes was a troubled, melancholic explosion.

END NOTES

1. See the illustration of this and other works by Hugo van der Goes in James Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture, the Graphic Arts from 1350 to 1575* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1985).
2. Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1953), 332. For an overview of Hugo's life and work, see "Hugo van der Goes" in *The Dictionary of Art*, edited by Jane Turner (London, 1997), vol. 12, 844–51.
3. Ibid.
4. Max J. Friedländer, *Hugo van der Goes*, translated by Heinz Norden (New York and Washington, D.C.: Praeger Publishers, 1967), vol. 4, *Early Netherlandish Painting*.
5. Ibid., 48–55.
6. Ibid., 50.
7. Ibid., 20–35.
8. Jochen Sander, *Hugo van der Goes: Stiltentwicklung und Chronologie* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1992), 23.
9. Craig Harbison, "Visions and Meditations in Early Flemish Painting," *Simiolus* 15 (1985): 99.
10. Ibid., 88.
11. James Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture, the Graphic Arts from 1350 to 1575* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice

Hall, 1985), 172.

12. Rudolf Wittkower and Margot Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn: The Character and Conduct of Artists: A Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1963), 108–13.

13. *Ibid.*, 112.

14. See also the account in H.C. Erik Midelfort, *A History of Madness in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Stanford.: Stanford University Press. Forthcoming).

15. Panofsky, 335.

16. See also the the account in Otto von Simson, “*Compassio* and *Co-redemptio* in Rogier van der Weyden’s *Descent from the Cross*,” *Art Bulletin* 35 (1953): 9ff.

17. See Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

18. Panofsky, 332.

19. Wolfgang Stechow, *Northern Renaissance Art 1400–1600: Sources and Documents* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 15.

20. *Ibid.*, 16.

21. *Ibid.*, 17.

22. J.F. Moffitt, “Painters ‘Born Under Saturn’: The Physiological Explanation,” *Art History* 11:2 (1988): 195–216. See also Midelfort.

23. Michael O’Connell, *Robert Burton* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), 54.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Robert M. Walker, “The Demon in the Portinari Altarpiece,” *Art Bulletin* 42 (1960): 218–19.

26. R. Koch, “Flower Symbolism in the Portinari Altarpiece,” *Art Bulletin* 46 (1964): 76.

27. Snyder, 317.

28. Koch; M.B. McNamee, "Further Symbolism in the Portinari Altarpiece," *Art Bulletin* 45 (1963): 142; and Panofsky.
29. Koch, 70-76.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. O'Connell, preface.
33. Max J. Friedländer, *Early Netherlandish Painting: From Van Eyck to Bruegel*, translated by Marguerite Kay (London: Phaidon Publishers, 1956), 32-40.
34. *Britannica Online*, "Goes, Hugo van der," <<http://www.britannica.com>>.
35. Panofsky, 338.

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# Let There Be Light: The Teacher Research Movement



*Jennifer E. Lubkin*

**H**OW MANY TEACHERS does it take to change a light bulb? Depends how big the light bulb. There is, as I recently found out, an awfully large number of teachers trying to change an awfully large "light bulb"—the idea that everyone but teachers knows what's going on in the schools. Teachers are challenging this notion and coming together in a movement which recognizes their unique opportunity to be researchers of education. The recent 19th Annual Ethnography in Education Research Forum held March 7th and 8th, 1998, at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education illuminated this growing teacher research movement. My attendance was made possible through the generosity of the Louis L. Goldstein Program for Public Affairs.

We crowded into rooms, pressing ourselves against the walls, squeezing into chair-desks, jiggling notepad, coffee, donut, bag and jacket. An expansive table, surrounded by cushioned chairs, filled most of the room. Like apprehensive students, few were bold enough to sit in this front row; some even opted for the floor. Seemingly the only undergraduate present, I sat comfortably, though often on the edge of this over-stuffed room ... and often on the edge of this charged scene, for the conference was only secondarily an assembly of teachers and

scholars shuffling through presentation after presentation after lecture. Primarily, it was a celebration, both of how far the movement has come and its significance.

Teacher research grew out of the discipline of anthropology and its inherent interest in education as a means of transmitting culture. Like American anthropology in general, modern educational anthropology has its roots in the 1920s, though study had taken place since the late 1800s. Between the 1920s and 1950s, many anthropologists were examining education—Gregory Bateson, Ruth Benedict, Franz Boas, Bronislaw Malinowski, Margaret Mead, et al.—but only as an element in another cultural system or a section of a chapter in a general ethnography.<sup>1</sup> The 1954 Stanford Conference on Anthropology and Education recapped this history and attempted to make explicit future aims, but more importantly it explored and addressed the relationship between anthropology and education. “At the time of the conference, there was no such thing as ‘educational anthropology’ and ... the conference did not aim to create it.”<sup>2</sup> The relationship at this time simply constituted the study of education by anthropologists using anthropological methods. Margaret Mead and others argued for a focusing—the majority of research ought to be undertaken only by those with an occupational interest in both anthropology and education:

This conference has raised the question rather seriously as to whether the communication is between *anthropology* and *education* as such. I mean, can someone defined as pure anthropologist who has no experience in education, who has not primarily studied education in primitive societies, who is not interested in teaching ... engage in a very profitable form of communication except at the book-reading source material level? ... So there's a possibility that the communication will have to proceed majorly [sic] either from anthropologists who

have taken an active interest in education—an acting professional interest—or educators who've taken an active interest in anthropology.<sup>3</sup>

Forty-four years later this was precisely who was represented at the University of Pennsylvania conference—anthropologists George Spindler and Frederick Erickson, educators such as Rita Gros, Kristin Stapor, Carlton Jordan, and Dana Sherman, and also others who work with children and/or teachers, including Simi Linton, Sarah Carney, and Leila Flores-Duena.

This group of new education researchers, much larger and more diverse than their predecessors, has likewise produced a larger body of research significantly distinct from past efforts. Like the field in general, the trend has moved toward applied anthropology at home in America (rather than the classic small tropical island); but even at home, research covers a broad spectrum of very specific topics.

Rita Gros and Kristin Stapor, both elementary school teachers in Virginia, studied the writing development of children. By plotting the developmental level of writing for their students over time, they discovered that writing, “through the eyes of the child,” did not concur with the established linear model. Rather, the process in many children took the form of a double helix, often looping back on itself; so while a child might continue to progress, she or he would appear to digress, resulting in incorrect placement in school.

Carlton Jordan and Dana Sherman, both secondary English teachers in New York, in collaboration with their principal, Bernadette Anand, and CUNY professor Michelle Fine, developed an untracked World Literature course for their multiethnic, multiracial, yet segregated high school. The title of their presentation says much about the results—”When Diversity Hurts: Spaces for Extraordinary Conversations.” In their classroom of blacks, whites, Hispanics, Asians (and

many who defy simple racial categorization) of all socio-economic statuses and all academic abilities, students spoke very openly, very honestly, and very revealingly about their own lives and their own families. Topics of discussion often included social hierarchy, virtue, history, racism, and cultural conflict. "If there is no pain in diversity, you have done nothing," says Fine. Beyond the knowledge that this type of class can be successful and that democratic space can be made in such a school, Jordan and Sherman showed also how to create this space utilizing specific methods of teaching, curriculum, and physical organization of the classroom.<sup>4</sup>

Simi Linton works with handicapped children in schools. She made the point that the handicapped receive limited socialization as compared to the nonhandicapped. Many do not have the benefit of transgenerational guidance, as their parents are not physically disabled, and the positive images they receive from society are limited to Sesame Street. Movies and television virtually never portray people with handicaps as sexually or romantically engaged. Furthermore, the lack of accessibility to bathroom facilities in public schools and other buildings results in confused gender socialization. One male student Linton knew was routinely taken to the girl's bathroom because the boy's was not accessible.

Sarah Carney is a graduate student who teaches girl's figure skating. Carney began research with the skaters in order to discover how they felt about their bodies; but every time she broached the subject in the locker room or the sitting area, their response was invariably knowledgeable and "frighteningly articulate" about eating disorders and body weight. She proposes that perhaps by limiting our perspectives of girls' bodies to sources of problems, deficit, and illness, we limit or ignore the possibility of the girls' image of their bodies as sources of freedom, expressiveness, and beauty. Only on the ice could Carney extract a statement illustrating this other possibility—"I feel like a fish."

Leila Flores-Duenas works with a small group of young Latino students, attempting to develop their reading skills. At first, the students were put off by reading—"saying words," they called this mysterious process. As Flores-Duenas discovered, this phrase arises because her students were taught by repeating after their teacher passages from which they could derive little meaning. With so much of reading and comprehension dependent on context clues which are often reflective of culture, these students progressively fell behind their white classmates. Yet when these children "discovered" they could read, it was not culturally familiar texts they chose but mainstream series like the Baby-Sitter's Club.

Teacher research, however, is more than description and analysis of the educational system; it is a means of empowerment. Suppose it is teachers who conduct the research investigating what takes place in the school building and which aspects of this are constructive and which destructive—only by teaching the World Literature course could Jordan and Sherman learn how to create democratic space. Only by getting out on the ice could Sarah Carney discover that, despite the effect of formal education and mass media, there remain spaces for girls to think of their bodies as something other than a source of problems. And suppose this research comes to be respectfully used to revise administrative policy, curriculum, school design, etc. Reform, then, becomes an active response to real issues and not a response to public opinion on issues contrived by politicians. Teachers further their agency for the benefit of students.

The teacher research movement mirrors ideals and trends in anthropology in general with regard to participant-observation and advocacy, a move one might term participant-advocacy. Furthermore, these few examples of research clearly demonstrate the link, the dependency, between anthropology and education, as culture is both very explicitly and implicitly transmitted in formal and informal educational settings. Also, many of the fundamental issues debated in

anthropology are very relevant to teacher research—the effect of the researcher on the informant, the thin line between establishing generalizations and recognizing exceptions, problems which arise from becoming conscious of the previously subconscious or unconscious, the limitations inherent in interviewing, etc.

Despite this deep linkage, discrepancies exist. While the movement claims to adopt ethnography as its primary means of expression, it is not the ethnography of anthropology. At times teacher-researchers have even defended the movement against criticisms that it has not adhered to natural science models of research, an absurd possibility considering its social science roots. The teacher research movement, in my opinion, has moved too far from the theoretical foundations and assumptions of anthropology, though surely this is linked to the growth of the movement. Perhaps premonition of this distance is what caused George Spindler to write, "To those of us who have struggled to persuade educators that ethnographic studies would help illuminate the educational process and fellow scientists that they should undertake ethnographic studies of this process, the sudden wave of popularity is exhilarating. It is also alarming."<sup>5</sup> It appears, from the presentations I watched, that teacher-researchers have abandoned placing patterns of behavior carefully in a broader cultural context. This may be a result of the negative side of being too much the participant and not enough the observer. The school is so much of the teacher's world; even referring to the students as their children, perhaps they lose perspective. In order to regain perspective, they may have to abandon their adaptive strategies, something which could ultimately be detrimental to their teaching and well-being. For example, some, like Kozol, adopt the view that those who live in poverty are ultimately victims—a belief contrary to the anthropological statement that all people are agents.

To continue to progress, the teacher research movement must return to its theoretical basis in anthropology and the people-oriented social sciences. At the same time, however (and perhaps somewhat contrary), it ought to continue making available research opportunities to those who already intimately know the education field, including students who, too, can offer a unique perspective. Perhaps working in conjunction with an anthropologist could resolve this dichotomy; however, as Margaret Mead warns, this can introduce another mess of limitations. Perhaps we anthropologists can only scratch our chins and wait and see what the teachers decide, not forgetting to congratulate them on this long-in-coming right to choose. Congratulations, teachers.

END NOTES

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2. *Ibid.*, 13.
3. Margaret Mead, "Summary," in *Education and Anthropology*, edited by George D. Spindler. (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1955), 272.
4. A video has been made documenting the experience of creating their World Literature classroom, *Off Track: Classroom Privilege For All*, 30 min., Hancock Productions, 1998, videocassette.
5. George D. Spindler, *Doing the Ethnography of Schooling: Educational Anthropology in Action*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982), 1.

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# The Clinton Street Sonnets



*Brett Gaba*

## I

Sometimes delicacy is all too apparent in the scent of lilacs burning  
from the Clinton Street flower markets amidst antique bricks and ivy  
Patterned sheets over a cool queen sized mattress on a parquet floor  
In a one bedroom apartment the body cannot subsist  
On a diet of tea and oranges regardless of the post office  
With its brass mail doors and lilac print stamps dictating seasons  
In perennial evenings with half empty bottles of port  
Colored walls for a soothing effect in Manhattan's West Village.

Somewhere between religion and biology are your hands  
On my ivy patterned sheets still silent from Central Park's Fall  
From September and wake to an allegro of green  
Of all that is seen and unseen I surrendered to only your hands  
And treachery, I swear

I would have shown you the mountains

## II

In early September with New York burning from the Clinton Street  
Flower markets steep with lilies and Jerusalem Artichoke Flowers  
Painted by Monet under high molded ceilings only my post cards stay  
On the walls facing backwards denying the Seine and the Eiffel Tower  
The sun in Manhattan and only "*I am your addict.*"

And my signature settles over and around you like ivy  
Patterned sheets on a cool queen sized mattress as evidence  
Of a world before Clinton Street and waking alone.

Somewhere between religion and biology is a memory  
of your hands upon me in the morning where everything is fated,  
beautiful and pure on this side of the Atlantic and the ocean is cool  
and full of stars tonight shaking with heroine withdrawal and moving  
white curtains aside for *Carmina Burana* as you breathe  
An ocean away in your spacious Clinton Street Loft.

III

But leave the door moldings white, Marie-Anne, and soothe  
The walls with powder blue floors and a queen sized mattress  
Tented in sea foam and cool ivy sheets with flea market  
Furniture stripped and repainted with pictures  
Of Saint Maria Goretti sitting on your parquet floor  
On a warm seasoned evening knock down the walls  
And leave them bare to create the space you're looking for  
Across the Atlantic, away from the Seine and my hands.

But leave my post cards up, Marie-Anne, the Atlantic is cold  
In September like my room in the Latin Quarter bare of Jerusalem  
Artichoke Flowers and your lilacs. Paris is cold without you  
And the Arc slouches silent under grey skies. Our history  
Was not entirely tragic,

we blended like water colors into memory.

# Latin Poetry



*Ben Schiek*

*Yeah, it's like, so wonderful  
but really hurts too  
at the same time,*

said one  
of my classmates in Latin  
class when the teacher was explaining  
to us why Catullus says

that love is like little  
flames feeding  
off the viscera just below your skin.  
But that was all right,  
I was okay,

Until the next day,  
when Catullus said,  
*what a woman says to her lover  
should be written in the wind*

*and rushing water,*  
and my classmate raised  
his hand again.



## CONTRIBUTORS

CORTNEY CLULOW, the 1998 Lynette Nielson Art Award winner, graduated *magna cum laude* with a double major in art and humanities. In the spring of 1997, she was the first Washington College exchange student to study at the Maryland Institute. She lives in Pasadena, Maryland.

BRETT GABA is a senior from Lavale, Maryland, who is majoring in Hispanic studies. He studied for a semester at the University of Granada, Spain.

ED GEISWEIDT graduated *summa cum laude* with an English major, a minor in philosophy, and "near minors" in history and drama. He was also the 1998 winner of the Sophie Kerr Prize for literary ability and promise. His thirty-two-page essay "The Habits of Reading Communities in Early Modern England," parts of which are printed here, was made possible by The Society of Junior Fellows, which funded his joint internship/research project at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D. C. He thinks Carly Simon's song "You're So Vain" is about him.

BERNADETTE HÖFER, from Wissen, Germany, is a student at the Johannes-Gutenberg University of Mainz, majoring in English and French with a Spanish minor. "The highlight of my studies certainly was the full scholarship I got from the department of American studies at my university to study at Washington College during the year 1997-98 and serve as German assistant. During my stay I started learning Japanese. At Washington College I was part of the German club,

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the French club, the Spanish club, and the International Relations club. I participated in the Model UN conference in Boston in February 1998." It is her dream to become a university professor or an ambassador.

JENNIFER E. LUBKIN, from Calvert County, Maryland, is entering her third year as an anthropology major and an education track candidate. In the coming year, after intense study of Spanish, she hopes to attend college and do ethnographic fieldwork for a semester in Ecuador. Jennifer apprentices in the Literary House Pressroom, learning letterpress printing and bookbinding. She was the editorial and production assistant for this volume of the *Washington College Review*.

PAIGE PATTERSON grew up in Stillwater, Maine. She graduated in 1998 with a major in humanities and minors in music, Hispanic studies and creative writing. Her poems have recently appeared in the *Baltimore Review* and the *Portland Review Literary Journal*. Last summer she was a fellow at the Bucknell University Seminar for Younger Poets. In the near future she plans to either attend graduate school, join the Peace Corps, or work on the farm of Mr. Panayotis Passalis in Rhodes, Greece.

BEN SCHIEK, a 1998 graduate in Hispanic studies, spent a semester at the University of San Francisco in Quito, Ecuador. He comes from Gaithersburg, Maryland. He stresses that Truth is above sectarian dogmatism, and calls for a return to the traditional values of Marx, Nietzsche, and the Buddha.

KAREN SIEGER, from Avondale, Pennsylvania, graduated *cum laude* in 1998 with a double major in international studies and economics and a minor in history. She interned with the U.S. State Department in the Philippines and studied abroad in Schwäbisch-Gmünd, Ger-

## CONTRIBUTORS

many. She went to Ecuador with Washington College's summer program in order to study tortoises and returned with a treatise on problems created by the oil industry.

NATALIE DIANE SMITH is a resident of Coram, Long Island, New York. She graduated *magna cum laude* from Washington College in 1998 with a sociology major and gender studies minor. She was also honored with the Margaret Horsley Award, Outstanding Community Service Recognition, the Gold Pentagon Award (Omicron Delta Kappa honorary society), and the Eugene B. Casey Medal for her outstanding qualities of scholarship, character, leadership and campus citizenship. The autumn of 1998 will find her studying for her professional degree at the University of Chicago School of Social Work.

KATHERINE E. VANDERHOFF is a sophomore from Bloomingdale, New Jersey, with a political science major and Hispanic studies minor. She will graduate in 2000 and she hopes to go on to graduate/law school and obtain a joint M.A./J.D. degree. "Ever since I can remember, I have been fascinated with the areas of law and government. Domestic violence is a crime which interests me, not only because I am female but also because it seems to be a crime which often becomes lost in the loopholes of justice. Women are often afraid or ashamed to come forward because they feel that no one will take them seriously. It is for this reason that I submitted my domestic violence paper to the *WC Review*. As I see it, the first step in helping victims of this awful crime to have the courage to trust others is AWARENESS."

MEGAN WOLFF was awarded honorable mention for the Lynette Nielsen Art Award in 1998, her sophomore year. She will be the student editor and production assistant for volume seven of the *Washington College Review* in 1999. Megan comes from Reisterstown, Maryland.



## *Afterword*



FOUNDED IN 1993 to encourage, promote, and celebrate student writing across the liberal arts disciplines, the *Washington College Review* has evolved in many significant directions over the past five years. A large number of faculty editors have worked hard to define and redefine the mission and scope of what has become a first-rate college academic journal.

Our first issue was printed by hand in the O'Neill Literary House Pressroom with a budget pieced together from contributions by The Society of Junior Fellows, The Louis L. Goldstein Program in Public Policy, the Joseph H. McLain Program in Environmental Studies, the Sophie Kerr Committee, the Writers' Union, the O'Neill Literary House, and the Student Government Association. Although the student contributors that year were not required to crank the letterpresses themselves, an air of joint adventure surrounded the publication of that first issue. We all came together with the common aim of making our intellectual community here at Washington College visible in text and in book form.

But we soon realized that an expanded content—to include work from *all* disciplines at the college—and a desire to reproduce graphics and photographs would require a more professional production method and a stable budget. With the help of Meredith Davies Hadaway, the Vice President for College Relations, this transformation took place within two years and by 1995 the journal was refashioned into its current design and focus.

This year inaugurates the addition of color reproductions of student artwork. We hope this addition will please our readers. Over the years I have heard much praise for the quality of the content of the *Washington College Review*. But even though credit needs to be given to the effort put forth by all the faculty, administrators, and students who make each issue possible, it's our students in particular—the poets, the physicists, the translators, the economists, the art critics, the historians, the literary scholars—who must be celebrated and praised first. The standards represented here are high, for both writers and artists, to the benefit of our readers.

Katherine E. Wagner  
Creative Writing Editor

## *A Word from the Publisher: First Impressions*



I HAVE JUST COMPLETED MY FIRST YEAR as a member of the Washington College faculty and as publisher of the *Washington College Review*. I present the product of the latter, this issue, as evidence, Exhibit A, corroborating an observation made as the former: that the liberal arts education offered here not only works, but works in accordance with the impressive demands it puts upon itself. In department after department across the natural and social sciences and humanities an accomplished and dedicated faculty engages the students, and the students in turn engage the great writers, the great critics, the seminal discoveries, the large ideas. This is as it should be. Our students' talents are further inspired, guided, buttressed, by the many guest speakers who come to campus to share their expertise—esteemed guests such as I. Michael Heyman of the Smithsonian. This, too, is as it should be.

What is not common is the degree to which, and the genuine enthusiasm with which, so many of our students take up the challenge to think, to create, to forge learned and unique perspectives. Here among these pages are a few of their triumphs. Carefully researched essays such as Ed Geisweidt's look into early modern England, or artistic renderings such as Courtney Clulow's paintings, or vivid poetic imagery such as we find in the work of Paige Patterson—just to randomly select a few of this year's contributions—provide us with a sampling of our students' breadth of interest and depth of comprehension and gift of artistry that inform as much as represent the success of our liberal arts endeavor.

WASHINGTON COLLEGE REVIEW

As witness to this process, as well as one who takes great pride in playing a role in it, the past year has been an exciting and rewarding one for me. This issue offers you some idea why.

Robert Mooney  
Publisher

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